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THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

1890-1903

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Socialist Labor Party of America, from its very inception to the present, has striven to maintain a rather peculiar brand of doctrinaire Marxism. As the party interprets Marx, this means that there should be substituted for capitalism a "system of social ownership of the means of production, industrially administered by the workers, who assume control and direction as well as operation of their industrial affairs."<sup>1</sup> The party, as far as its theoretical pronouncements are concerned, has maintained this line with great consistency and with some logic. In the realm of practical politics and intra-party relations, however, the party is now and usually has been very far from following its own dictum. Close examination makes a dichotomy very clear.

The above quotation would lead one to believe that the Socialist Labor Party believes in decentralized social control, and, in accordance with the party dictum, they favor popular election of shop foremen and management personnel. Yet, if the practices of the party are any indication,

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<sup>1</sup>22nd National Convention, Socialist Labor Party, May 1-3, 1948. Minutes, Reports, Platform, Resolutions, Etc., (New York: Socialist Labor Party), p. 46.

elected officials, when in office, are there solely to carry out orders from above. Even in some of their political aspects they admit a final lack of local control, for one of the chief objects of their attack has been the lack of planning on a national scale. While planning and control may not be necessarily concurrent concepts, certainly planning is useless without a great deal of control to enforce the results of national planning. In its party practices, the Socialist Labor Party recognizes the necessity for national control, and exercises a vast amount of it.

Being absolute idealists, the party members can visualize a socialist government which would work democratically, even while their own organization is hopelessly straight-jacketed by the despotism of the National Executive Committee. The party conventions, to my knowledge without exception, always adopt by a completely overwhelming vote (usually greater than ten to one) all proposals suggested by the national office.<sup>2</sup> For example, the votes on over thirty resolutions suggested by the National Executive in 1920 ranged from 1534 to 4 to 1311

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<sup>2</sup>See National Convention Proceedings, 1920-1956 of which are readily available.

to 224.<sup>3</sup> Contrariwise, nearly all measures proposed from the sections or from individual delegates are rejected. Few of the party members seem to notice this apparent dictatorship, and, should they happen to become cognizant, the National Office promptly reads them out of the party for "vicious efforts to disrupt the Socialist Labor Party."<sup>4</sup> Any statement of incipient democracy on the part of the constituent sections is always regarded as an organized plot aimed at the heart of the party. This absolute lack of democracy, which may be prevalent in other American political parties, and to some degree in both major parties, has been the greatest roadblock to efficiency or influence that the Socialist Labor Party has had. The lack of democratic control, coupled with rigidity in thought, can be traced to the European nature of the party.

In the last presidential election, the party polled a nation-wide total vote of 44,327.<sup>5</sup> It may well be asked why such a party, which has not increased since 1900,

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<sup>3</sup>National Convention, Socialist Labor Party May 5-10, 1920 Reports Resolutions Platform Etc. (New York: Socialist Labor Party, n. d.), pp. 51-54.

<sup>4</sup>22nd National Convention Socialist Labor Party . . . 1948. (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1949), p. 112.

<sup>5</sup>AP dispatch, The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon), December 17, 1956, p. 5.

should be studied. There are several reasons why such a study is a valid undertaking. First, the intraparty machinations of the Socialist Labor Party are a concrete example of a group, who, while being led by a dictator, feel that they are acting individually and democratically. Certainly this is one of the secrets of successful totalitarian rule. A study of the Socialist Labor Party presents a microcosm of this feeling. Second, the Socialist Labor Party demonstrated the weakness of entire acceptance and rigid adherence to a set political or economic code, a code which cannot be changed. Questions within the party leadership are never resolved according to fact or propitiousness, but rather judged solely in the light of pronouncements by Marx or De Leon. Third, such a study shows clearly the intolerance that exists among idealists; in this case among idealists of the left. It has been very popular among liberals and left-wingers to charge 'intolerance' to those supporting conservative principles. It is dangerous to assume that the left is any more tolerant than the right. A study of the party makes it clear that tolerance is a matter that must be judged individually, or by specific organized groups, and is not an epithet that can be thrown at any political wing. Fourth, a study of the Socialist Labor Party demonstrates that party rigidity as practiced

by many European parties (and by the S. L. P.) is unsuited to the American political scene. Related closely to this fourth point is a fifth reason: a study of the party will show that a political party based on foreign elements cannot grow in American politics. Overwhelmingly the Socialist Labor Party has been and is a party of recent immigrants to the United States. As these immigrants become Americanized, they lose interest in the party. Lastly, as history in itself, the gyrations of the party members and the purges by the party leaders make an interesting and informative study.

## CHAPTER II

### BEGINNINGS OF THE SLP

The beginnings of the Socialist Labor Party in America are to be found, of course, in the general socialist movement of the latter part of the nineteenth century, and in one of the primary voices of this movement, the International Working-Men's Association, the first International. This International, founded in London on September 28, 1864, was really never a force in the world, even in the socialist world, but it did have an influence and effect on many individuals and other groups. During most of its existence, it struggled along with only a few sections in the major nations. It was perhaps strongest in Germany, but even there it did not become prominent, and the socialist movement went on to success, not because of the International, but because of the Lassalleans, who were often opposed to the International. The International, such as it was, was strained to the breaking point because of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Internal harmony within the International had never been conspicuous, and the enmity that was aroused by the war between the French and the German members was so great that by 1872 there were few sections left, and these were primarily concentrated in Switzerland and America. The American group of sections, euphemistically termed the North American Federation, though not strong, was

hardy enough to outlive its parent body, which was formally dissolved in 1876. Many members of the North American Federation, being deprived of their international body, began to look for allies in the American labor movement with whom they might be able to rebuild their organization. They found what they thought was a good source of recruitment in the National Labor Union, an organization which, like the International, was on the downgrade in membership and effectiveness.

The National Labor Union, a non-socialist body, had first been organized in Baltimore in 1866, and had had, in its early years, a phenomenal growth. By 1868, under the leadership of William H. Sylvis, it had a membership of around 640,000.<sup>1</sup> The Union was always much concerned with politics, and Sylvis, at the Convention of 1868, was able to persuade the membership to found the National Labor Reform Party. After Sylvis's death in 1868, both the Union and the Party rapidly disintegrated, and many of the more socialistically inclined sections of the Union joined the International. The Party itself outlived the Union, and increasingly tended to reflect a socialist view, and it

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<sup>1</sup>Richard T. Ely, The Labor Movement in America (New York: Crowell, 1886), p. 69.



became partially controlled by the "Internationalized" sections. In 1870 the Party pulled a sizeable vote (18,918) centered in Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> In 1872 the Labor Reform Party held its national convention in Columbus, Ohio, and nominated Judge David Davis of Illinois and Judge Joel Parker of New Jersey for president and vice-president, respectively. After both had declined, a second convention substituted Charles O'Connor, a New York lawyer and certainly not a socialist, for the presidential nomination. O'Connor received 29,489 votes for president, but the figure is not indicative of Labor Reform Party strength, as O'Connor was also the candidate of a faction of the Democratic Party calling themselves "straight" or "Bourbon" Democrats. Even the platform of the Labor Reformers in 1872 was not particularly socialistic, though it did hint acceptance of the class struggle thesis and it asked the government "to exercise its power over railroads and telegraph corporations."<sup>3</sup> Many members of the Labor Reform Party, apparently having expected some miracle in the 1872 elections, left the party, but the more socialistic and doctrinaire among its members

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<sup>2</sup>Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), I, 336-37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 337.

held on, hoping that the miracle was merely delayed for four years. These "stalwarts" would certainly form a politically-minded nucleus if a socialist party were to appear on the scene.

With the National Labor Union, the North American Federation, and the Labor Reform Party all on the wane, many members, especially the Germans among them, quit these organizations to join the only remaining labor-socialist groups in the country, the various independent German Workingmen's Associations. In general, they were Lassalleian socialists who believed in the primacy of political action, rather than in economic pressure through unionization of labor. It was felt by most of them, however, that political organization ought to have a union organization as a base. These German associations also served in a non-political and non-economic role as a social group for foreign workmen in a strange land. One such group was the Socio-Political Working-Men's Association, formed in Chicago in 1869. A like group with a similar name appeared in Cincinnati about the same time, but with no apparent connection. In January of 1874, part of the Chicago group formed a political party, the Labor Reform Party of Illinois, initiating the purely socialist party in the west. The presence of former members

of the National Labor Union may be inferred from the selection of the name for the new party.

Meanwhile, a similar event occurred in the east, when in May of the same year, Section VI, the German Social Democratic Workingmen's Union, which had been founded in September, 1870, by George C. Stiebeling, pulled out of the declining International to form the German Social Democratic Workingmen's Party.<sup>4</sup> The split had come about largely because of the domination of the International's Section I, New York, which had dominated the International Federation, and had expelled both Section VI and Stiebeling. The tendency of the New York group to dominate completely the scene, and to expel any and all members who challenged its leadership was apparent in the International in the seventies. This tendency toward New York domination has continued and has been intensified by most socialist groups since, and has been the ultimate cause of many of the defections and splits that have rent the socialist political movement. This New York control precludes a "democratically" controlled party. The Social Democratic Workingmen's Party under Stiebeling's leadership, while never large, was able to

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<sup>4</sup> John R. Commons and others, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1926), II, 210-218.

maintain itself for the next few years and met in regular conventions.

In April, 1876, the National Labor Union, which for practical purposes had been non-existent since 1873, made an attempt to revive itself. The attempt failed, but the socialist visionaries who still had some connection with the Union took advantage of this funeral convention of the Union to issue a call for a unity conference of all socialistic groups in the United States (politically oriented or not) to meet in Philadelphia the next July. The date was obviously selected to coincide with the last meeting of the International, scheduled to have its disbandment meeting on July 4, 1876. On July 19, 1876, the unity conference called for by the National Labor Union socialists was held in connection with the third annual convention of the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party. Present at the unity conference were representatives from the Labor Party of Illinois, with a supposed 593 members, the North American Federation (formerly a part of the then defunct International) with 635, and the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States (Third edition; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 209. Also see Commons, op. cit., II, 270.

of North America, which claimed 1,500 members. The unity conference was successful in creating a new organization, the Workingmen's Party of the United States. The new Party reflected the schism that was felt everywhere in the socialist world, being divided on the proper relation between political action and trades union economic suasion. The representatives of the North American Federation (Friedrich Sorge and Otto Weydemeyer) were strongly in favor of the orthodox Marxist position of working through socialistic unions. This view had a supposed assist from Marx himself, inasmuch as the latter had backed Sorge in similar controversies within the international. In spite of the strong Sorge position, the statements from the unity conference were of a compromise character. The new party took as its demand the principles of the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party, as follows:

The Social Democratic Workingmen's Party seeks to establish a free state founded on labor. Each member of the party promises to uphold, to the best of his ability, the following principles:

1. Abolishment of the present unjust political and social conditions.
2. Discontinuance of all class rule and class privileges.
3. Abolition of the working men's dependence upon the capitalist by introduction of cooperative labor in place of the wage system, so that every laborer will get the full value

of his work.

4. Obtaining possession of the political power as a prerequisite for the solution of the labor question.

5. United struggle, united organization of all working men, and strict subordination of the individual under the laws framed for the general welfare.

6. Sympathy with the working men of all countries who strive to attain the same object.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the Sorge position was expressed in the same platform by stating that

political action of the party is confined generally to obtaining legislative acts in the interest of the working class proper. It will not enter into a political campaign before being strong enough to exercise a perceptible influence . . .

We work for the organization of trades unions upon a national and international basis to ameliorate the condition of the working people and seek to spread therein the above principles.<sup>7</sup>

Even as the split in Germany between the pure "Marxists" and the Lassalleans had caused a split in the United States so the fusion of the two factions in Germany (through the Gotha program, 1875) augured a similar fusion between the opposing bodies in the United States. The new party was

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<sup>6</sup>Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism (3rd ed.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 207.

<sup>7</sup>John R. Commons, op. cit., II, 270.

to be run by an executive committee, with headquarters in Chicago, and a Board of Control, centered in Newark. As is customary in American Marxist parties, the Chicago sections were given effective control over the Executive Committee of the new party. Philip Van Patten was chosen as the national secretary, apparently because the leader of the Lassalleans, Adolph Strasser (at the time national secretary of the German Workingmen's Party) and Sorge didn't really trust each other, in spite of the consolidation of forces. Van Patten had the further advantage that he understood English--a rare accomplishment in the party at that day.

The so-called unity of the new party was more talked about than real. The intolerance of the group can be shown from the very outset, when representatives of the Free German Community of Philadelphia, the Slavonian Socio-Political Labor-Union of Cincinnati, and the Labor-Union of Milwaukee were all refused seats at the unity conference.<sup>8</sup> In 1877 it became apparent that the Lassalleans and the "pure and simple" unionists (generally former Internationalists) were not getting along together. The term

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<sup>8</sup>Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism (3rd ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 210.

"pure and simple"<sup>9</sup> was the designation attached by the Lassallean faction and indicated to them any Marxist who felt that ultimate socialization should come through union activity alone. It is perhaps the most opprobrious term that a Marxist can use in describing another Marxist.<sup>10</sup> There was a natural antipathy between the "pure and simplers" and Van Patten, who was very politically minded and attempted to guide the party into a regular political action. Strasser, while appearing as a rank Lassallean from Sorge's Internationalist position, seemed a strictly union man from Van Patten's position, and Strasser and Van Patten were frequently in serious conflict within the party. At the second convention of the Workingmen's Party, held in Newark, the group came out definitely for increased political action; repudiated those who would work for the socialist utopia only through the trades unions, and changed the name of the organization to the Socialistic Labor Party of North America. The Socialist Labor Party of today, while recognizing the Socialistic Labor Party as its forebear, maintains that the modern party is of a different breed.

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<sup>9</sup>For the origin of this term, see p. 86.

<sup>10</sup>For its use in this connection, see Daniel De Leon, Industrial Unionism, selected Editorials (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1920), passim.



Though the party has gone through many splits and defections, the contemporary party is in many ways much like the party in 1878. The latter party has always vitiated the earlier, emphasizing the "ic", and generally printing its name with ic capitalized: SocialistIC Labor Party.<sup>11</sup> In at least two basic tendencies, intolerance and a tendency toward fractionalization, there is certainly no difference between the old and the contemporary party. Internal re-  
 criminations and struggles for power were evident inside the party from the very first, as is evidenced by the exclusion, during the constituent unity conference, of certain representatives.<sup>12</sup> In the party's first two years (1876-1877) there was considerable success. According to Hillquit, there were twenty-four newspapers established which were "directly or indirectly supporting the party."<sup>13</sup> As official organs the party adopted the English publication Socialist and the German Sozial Demokrat, changing the names to Labor Standard and Arbeiterstimme respectively. Both of

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<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Eric Hass, The Socialist Labor Party and The Internationals (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1949), Chapter 2 passim.

<sup>12</sup>See p. 14, above.

<sup>13</sup>History of Socialism (3rd ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 225.

these organs had previously been published by the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party. The Vorbote, the organ of the Labor Party of Illinois, was also made an official party organ.<sup>14</sup>

Under Van Patten's leadership, and with this considerable press backing, the local party sections began to doubt the wisdom of waiting in a Fabian fashion before beginning their political action. As a result, there were many Socialist Labor backed candidates in 1878. In the election, the Party elected four men to the Illinois state house, three representatives and one senator. In Chicago and Saint Louis aldermen were elected, and candidates ran well in both Cincinnati and Cleveland.<sup>15</sup> These successes had the effect of increasing the desire to participate in political action in the west, while in the east, where the party had not fared as well, the tendency toward internal friction increased. There was a decline in party fortunes in 1879, and by the end of the year there were no English-language papers except the party organs, and there were only two German papers which were generally friendly to the

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<sup>14</sup> Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism (3rd ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 210.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

party, the New Yorker Volkszeitung, edited by Adolph Douai, a party member, and the Philadelphia Tageblatt. At the third convention of the Party, held at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, in late December, 1879 and early January, 1880, only twenty-four delegates appeared, representing twenty affiliated sections.<sup>16</sup> The total strength of the party must have been smaller than at its inception; a most optimistic guess as to membership would not place it at over 2600, a number almost incomprehensible when compared to the estimated 100,000 votes cast for party candidates in the state and local elections of 1877 and 1878. There is no good explanation for the rapid decline, though the internal dissension and the rise of the Greenback Party are certainly both factors.

It was apparent at the convention of 1879-1880 that even among the small number of delegates in attendance there were two distinct factions, the moderates (generally Lassalleian) and the Internationalists (both unionist and anarchist). The latter group had within it many incendiary individuals who were members of the Lehr und Wehr Verein, a military group which included not only a Socialistic Labor nucleus, but also the Bohemian Sharpshooters, Irish

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

Labor Guards, and similar groups.<sup>17</sup> Although Van Patten was much opposed to such military establishments within the party, the Vorhote had urged all workers to join the Lehr und Wehr Verein and to "contribute freely the few dollars necessary to arm and uniform themselves."<sup>18</sup> At Allegheny City the party affirmed Van Patten's view on the military organizations, though not until they had tossed bouquets to the Lehr und Wehr Verein and to Judges Barnum and McAllister, saying,

Our party was not disappointed in these men, for when the question . . . was brought into the courts, these judges affirmed the right of the people to maintain their own military organizations independent of the government. For having been instrumental in gaining this decision, the Lehr und Wehr Verein, the military workingmen's organization, fulfilled a valuable mission, thus convincing us that after all there is nothing on earth which is not sometimes useful.<sup>19</sup>

Thus in officially disowning the military group, the party

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<sup>17</sup>Alan Calmer, Labor Agitator the Story of Albert R. Parsons (New York: International Publishers, 1937), p. 43.

<sup>18</sup>Henry David, The History of the Haymarket Affair (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), p. 57.

<sup>19</sup>Socialistic Labor Party, Platform, Constitution and Resolutions together with a condensed report of Proceedings of the National Convention, held at Allegheny, Pa. December 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31, 1879 and January 1, 1880. (Detroit: National Executive Committee, 1880), p. 2.

still approved in principle the idea of forcible resistance. The conversion of the militarists to political activists was one of the primary tasks of the early party, and may have led to the slogan "Our Missile the Ballot." Eventually the Supreme Court upheld the validity of an Illinois act which forbade party military organizations.<sup>20</sup>

The moderates generally maintained control of the 1879-1880 Convention, losing only one vote.<sup>21</sup> One of the most discussed issues at the convention was the role of the Party in relation to the Greenbackers. Western delegates and some moderates advocated participation in the Greenback Conference with an eye to "socializing" the platform of the Greenback Party. The New York group insisted on absolute independence from all other political parties. There was no official agreement as to which course to take<sup>22</sup> but there was an understanding that socialist delegates would attend the Greenback Convention, and that the party would support the Greenback candidates. Several Socialistic Laborites did attend the Greenback conclave, including Philip Van

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<sup>20</sup>Presser vs. Illinois, 1886, (116 US. 252).

<sup>21</sup>Henry David, History of the Haymarket Affair, (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), p. 59.

<sup>22</sup>John R. Commons, op. cit., II, 285.

Patten. This close association with an outside (and non-socialist) party in 1880 caused many of the non-political group within the Socialist Labor Party to become disgusted and leave.

The platform adopted by the Allegheny City convention was radical for the time, but cannot be considered really Marxist, and represents a clear victory for the moderate forces within the party. It urged, on the national level, (1) popular initiative and referendum, (2) political equality regardless of creed, race, or sex, (3) establishment of a bureau of labor and a bureau of labor statistics, (4) repeal of all conspiracy laws against labor, (5) an eight hour day, (6) that taxes on uncultivated land be equal to those on cultivated areas, and (7) universal suffrage. On the state level, the platform asked for (1) state bureaus of labor statistics, (2) an eight hour day, (3) employer liability laws, (4) an effective child labor law protecting children below fourteen, (5) universal compulsory education, (6) factory, mine, and workshop inspectors and sanitary inspectors, (7) wages to be paid in money, (8) ballots printed at government expense in elections, and (9) an equalized property tax on all property, including that of religious

organizations.<sup>23</sup>

Though they controlled the convention, the moderates dared not go too far, and hence stopped short before authorizing full political activity. The net result was a confused outcome in which the party (1) did not reverse its 1876 stand but rather reiterated its stand against running candidates for the presidency, (2) selected three men for the membership to vote upon for nomination to the presidency, and (3) made an understanding to hold a socialist conference in connection with the Greenback convention, to back Weaver and Chambers if they were at all favorable to socialist thought. Philip Van Patten, national secretary, Albert R. Parsons, a member of the Chicago English-speaking section, Adolph Douai, educator and co-editor of the New Yorker Volkszeitung, and P. J. McGuire, party agitator, were consequently all in attendance at the Greenback Convention, but the socialist delegation numbered only 44 out of a 756 total.<sup>24</sup> A complete lack of either control or influence over the

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<sup>23</sup> Socialistic Labor Party Platform, Constitution, and Resolutions . . . Proceedings of National Convention held at Allegheny, Pa. . . . (Detroit: National Executive Committee, 1880), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> John B. Commons, op. cit., II, 286.

Greenback policy led to a crisis within the party. The Vorbote and the Nye Tid, strong Party supporters in Chicago, both came out in strong opposition to the Greenback compromise. As a result, the editors, Paul Grottkau of the German organ and Peterson of the Scandinavian, were expelled from the party on the advice of the National Executive Committee. Many members in section New York disapproved, and some New York area members formed, in November, 1880, the Social Revolutionary Club. This group in time affiliated with Bakunin's "Black International."<sup>25</sup> A few others left the party for various anarchist groups also, including Albert Parsons, who joined the anarchists after having been decisively beaten by the socialists in the fall of 1880 when he tried to oppose Thomas J. Morgan (a Lassallelean) for the control of Chicago's Sixth Assembly District.

The two factions continued to oppose one another, and conditions had not improved by 1882, when there were two sets of candidates run by the socialist groups in many cities, one by the pure and simplers, who were often aligned with the anarchists, and one by the Lassalleans,

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<sup>25</sup>Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States" in Donald Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., Socialism and American Life (Princeton: Princeton U., 1952), I, 237.



who often had little or no conception of scientific Marxism. When both groups did very poorly, most of the politically-minded groups gave up the struggle and the Socialistic Labor Party reached its lowest ebb. Van Patten, who had sacrificed so much in leading the party, and who had tried to Americanize it, finally gave up, disappearing after leaving a suicide note on April 22, 1883.<sup>26</sup> As a result of lack of national leadership and the schism, there were two conventions in 1883 claiming to be Socialistic Labor. The anarchists met in Pittsburgh, and the moderates, both the pro-political group and the pro-union faction, met in Baltimore. The Pittsburgh group put out a semi-moderate platform, and for a time it appeared that unity could be achieved; in the end, however, both sides were so doctrinaire that unification was impossible. As is the custom with left wing groups, they came to hate each other more than the enemy, and the struggle between the moderates, who remained in the control of the party, and the internationalist-anarchist group who left it, was far more bitter than the struggle of either against capitalism.

The Baltimore convention confirmed the political

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<sup>26</sup>Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism, (3rd ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 239.

weakness of the party by relegating politics to a minor role and upholding the original position taken in the 1876 Philadelphia unity convention: that the party should not engage in politics until it had a chance of victory. And the 1883 convention went even further by advocating abolition of the office of president. In part this may have been an attempt to woo back some of the anarchists; in part it was a rationalization concerning their political inefficacy. As a result of this action the party urged its members, in the election of 1884, to stay away from the polls--one of the few political parties in history to do so. There were statements issued in defense of such actions, of course, stating that elections, in a capitalist society, were merely humbug. In speaking to the European comrades it was put this way:

Our comrades in America have taken no part in the elections, but have proclaimed abstention from voting. Both great political parties, the Republican and the Democratic, are capitalistic. The struggle against corruption was a war cry in which the socialists would surely have joined, but the men who first sounded it were of such quality that the incorrigible skeptics doubted their ability and even their desire to clean out the Augean stables. The third party, composed of former Greenbackers and others, with General Butler at the head, our party also could not support, because the society was a rather promiscuous one, and General Butler, a skilful demagog but by no means a reliable customer. To enter into the campaign

independently, our party was too weak, and, what is still more important, it was of the opinion that the presidential elections are nowadays but a humbug and cannot be anything else.<sup>27</sup>

To say that the moderate section of the Socialist Labor Party in 1883 was Lassalleian is somewhat of a misnomer. Actually, both factions of 1883 believed in the achievement of the socialist utopia through revolution. The actual difference, in theory, between the two was in the means of obtaining the revolt. The moderate, or the continuing Socialistic Labor Party, felt that the revolution would evolve in time, and would not have to be forced. The anarcho-internationalist's uppermost desire was to bring on the revolution now. The role of the ballot, in Socialistic Labor parlance, as it was in Lassalle's doctrines, was to gain political power. Lassalle, however, then urged that reforms be instituted through the use of that power, while the Socialistic Labor Party expected the bourgeois to rebel and start the revolution when they saw the socialist political

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<sup>27</sup>Social Democrat (Zurich), as quoted in Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism (3rd ed.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 270.

power increasing.<sup>28</sup> The beginning of this revolt would cause the upsurge in 'revolutionary industrial unionism' which would then give meaning to the proletarian victory at the ballot box, and which would "also serve as the governmental structure of the Worker's Republic."<sup>29</sup> The Socialistic Labor Party did not believe in the acceptance by the majority before their program was instituted, but did feel that there should be a large following and a general understanding of their position before the revolution could be successful. Before the revolution, then, the ballot became more an instrument of education and a gauge of power than a means to power.

In less than a year, it became obvious that the official anti-political position was merely a rationalization, for in 1885 and 1886 the party not only resumed some political activity, but formed coalitions with whatever party happened, in the particular area, to be challenging the two major establishments. In many instances they aligned themselves with the United Labor

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<sup>28</sup>Richard T. Ely, "Recent American Socialism", Part IV of the Third Series of the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1884), p. 49.

<sup>29</sup>Arnold Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones (Second edition; New York: New York Labor News Co., 1946), p. 3.

Party; in some cases they supported Union Labor Party candidates, and in a few instances party members were the core of various non-socialist citizens' parties. An incidental result of this cooperation with other parties was the large amount of Americanization that was received by party members as a result of the contact with other groups. It had been Van Patten's greatest aim to strengthen and emphasize the English-speaking element; he had gone so far as to sacrifice a German press organ in order to save an English organ, even though the latter had a smaller circulation. He had tried to emphasize the distribution of English-language tracts and pamphlets as the most valuable means of instruction and of improving "our English-speaking membership."<sup>30</sup> Yet until 1885 all party business was either carried on in German, or, if in English, with a German translation. It was estimated that in 1886 not over ten percent of the membership was native born.<sup>31</sup> In 1887 Engels himself wrote that

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<sup>30</sup>Socialistic Labor Party, Platform, Constitution, and Resolutions . . . Proceedings of National Convention held at Allegheny, Pa. . . . (Detroit: National Executive Committee, 1880), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup>Jessie Hughan, American Socialism of the Present Day (New York: John Lane, 1912), p. 36. See also Morris Hillquit, Loose Leaves From A Busy Life (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 41.

this party . . . is called upon to play a very important part in the movement. But in order to do so they will have to doff every remnant of their foreign garb. They will have to become out and out American. They cannot expect the American to come to them; they, the minority, and the immigrants, must go to the Americans who are the vast majority and the natives. And to do that they must above all learn English.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of Engels' warning, and some honest work on the part of some party members, one of the chief attractions to the party has been and is its appeal to the foreign born minorities. As an example, the first meeting of the Irish Land League in New York was advertised by fliers proclaiming:

"Land and Liberty for the People of Downtrodden Ireland" "Grand Mass Meeting of Sympathy against Tyranny to be held under the auspices of the Socialist Labor Party on Friday, December 5, 1879 at 8 o'clock, P. M., Germania Assembly Rooms. Speakers are Patrick Ford, Dr. A. Douai, Alexander Jonas, John Swinton, Henry Drury, Osborne Ward, Charles Sotheran."<sup>33</sup>

All of these speakers were good party members, but not all could speak tolerable English. It must have been quite

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<sup>32</sup>As quoted in Arnold Peterson, Revolutionary Milestones (2nd ed.; New York: New York Labor News Co., 1946), p. 41.

<sup>33</sup>The People (New York), October 4, 1891.

a spectacle when Jonas addressed the Irish group in his German-English, and without a brogue. Jonas himself was keenly aware of his deficiency in English, and agreed to be the Socialist Labor candidate for mayor of New York in 1888 only after being assured by Hillquit that a knowledge of English was not a required qualification for the office.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the most "Anglicizing" factor in the decade of the eighties was the support which the party gave to the Henry George campaign in 1886, and the contact with others that party members consequently got. Though George had many aims in common with the socialists, most party members did not believe that Marx would have supported the single tax. The New Yorker Volkszeitung, the most influential of the Socialist Labor-inclined papers, pointed this out. We support Henry George, the paper said, "not on account of his single-tax theory, but in spite of it."<sup>35</sup>

The Henry George movement in America was basically a native movement, and it shows that there had been some Americanization of the New York socialists in that they

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<sup>34</sup>Morris Hillquit, Loose Leaves From A Busy Life (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 45.

<sup>35</sup>As quoted in Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism (3rd ed.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), p. 277.

were able to support him. How much the support of the Socialist Labor Party had to do with George's very creditable 68,000 votes, it is difficult to say, though one is tempted to assume little or no additions outside of their own numbers. The effect of George's vote on Section New York of the party, however, was electric. Falsely attributing George's fine showing to their work, the party members began to think seriously of independent political action on a national scale, a course specifically banned in at least three conventions. Such contemplation was aided by George himself, who, not misled as to the effect of his socialist backing, eliminated all socialists from his entourage on August 17, 1887.<sup>36</sup>

The New York Section, consequently, vowed never again to compromise their position by too readily joining with others in political action. At the party convention in Buffalo the next month, therefore, the question of independent political action was broached, and received much favorable comment. It was decided to form a party in opposition to George's United Labor Party. In order to have the maximum appeal, the new party was named the Progressive Labor Party, and was made up of Socialist

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<sup>36</sup>New York Times, August 19, 1887.



Laborites kicked out of the George party, plus any other socialistically-minded men who could be lured from the George camp. The Progressive Labor candidate for secretary of state received about 7,000 votes, as compared with the George party's 33,000. It takes a real optimist to regard the work of the Progressive Labor Party as the "solar plexus blow" to the United Labor Party, yet that is what one Socialist Labor editor thought!<sup>37</sup>

A second item of business at the Buffalo Convention, a possible association with the International Workingmen's Association, was also discussed, often in terms that reflected fear of cooperation with any group, political or otherwise. The IWMA, as it was called, was a western organization of perhaps 6000 members, officially, though not in fact, a revival of the first International. It was commonly called at the time the "Red" International, in order to distinguish it from the anarchist, or "Black" International, established at the Pittsburgh convention in 1883.<sup>38</sup> The Pacific slope groups of the IWMA were led by

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<sup>37</sup>Rudolph Katz, "With De Leon Since '89" in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (4th ed.; New York; New York Labor News Co., 1934), II, 2.

<sup>38</sup>Richard T. Ely, "Recent American Socialism," Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political

Burdette Haskell, a professional anti-Chinese; a Rocky Mountain contingent of the group looked to Joseph R. Buchanan.<sup>39</sup> It was the Haskell group which furnished most of the impetus to join with the Socialist Labor Party. The IWMA was basically anti-political, having declared:

We believe that if universal suffrage had been capable of emancipating the working people from the rule of the loafing class, it would have been taken away from them before now, and we have no faith in the ballot as a means of righting the wrongs under which the masses groan.<sup>40</sup>

The union, which would have augmented the membership of the party at least fourfold, was rejected, largely because of the new politically active bent within the party.<sup>41</sup>

The convention, momentarily swept by the optimism of the pro-political group, considered a presidential nomination.<sup>42</sup> When the matter of a presidential candidate was

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Science, 3rd Series, Part IV (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1884), p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> John R. Commons, op. cit., II, 200.

<sup>40</sup> Richard T. Ely, Labor Movement in America (New York: Crowell, 1886), p. 163.

<sup>41</sup> John R. Commons, op. cit., II, 300, says that the SLP and the IWMA became amalgamated. I think this idea stemmed from the joint declaration of cooperation which the two groups issued, not from a true amalgamation.

<sup>42</sup> Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism, p. 282

referred to the membership, however, it was solidly voted down. As a result Section New York went ahead on its own and selected electors to appear on the ballot where they had instructions to vote "no president" if elected! The total vote cast for the party in the 1888 elections was very small.<sup>43</sup> Shortly before the election, a constitutional change on the question of political action was adopted by the party through a mail referendum vote. The amendment, while not authorizing presidential politics, certainly was a victory for the political faction, and read in part as follows:

Whereas, the Socialist Labor Party of the United States is a propaganda party and

Whereas the participation in municipal, state, congressional elections is a good means of agitation,

Resolved that the Socialist Labor Party hereby declares itself to be an independent political party for the purpose of participating in such elections and

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<sup>43</sup>According to National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Twentieth National Convention Socialist Labor Party April 27-April 30, 1940 Minutes, Reports, Platforms, Resolution, Etc. (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1942), p. 209, they received 2068 votes, all in New York State. Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism, p. 282, gives them 3481, 2500 in New York City, 313 in outstate New York, 586 in Milwaukee, and 32 in New Haven. Stanwood, History of the Presidency I, 485, lists Appleton's as crediting "Socialist and scattering" as 7006, while McPherson's gives 9845.

Resolved, that faithful allegiance to the Socialist Labor Party and severance of all connections with other political parties be a condition of membership in the Socialist Labor Party--all other parties being considered as forming one reactionary mass.<sup>44</sup>

It became clear that the American Section, New York, was the group most outspoken in favor of political action, and that it was the German Section New York which acted as a brake on the movement to get into politics. The two official party papers, the German Der Sozialist, started in 1885, and the English Workman's Advocate, in 1886, were both more or less under the control of the American group, and the editors, W. L. Rosenberg and J. F. Busche, respectively, both attempted to foster political action in the party. Both papers were published by the New Yorker Volkszeitung, and the Volkszeitung group thought that true Marxism called for trades union organization and economic pressure upon the oppressors of the lower class, not political action. With both sides being extremely intolerant, it meant a certain fight when an editorial in the Workman's Advocate on September 15, 1888, urged a full

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<sup>44</sup>Workman's Advocate, (New Haven and New York) Aug. 10, 1889, as quoted in Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement (Columbia, S. C.: U. of South Carolina Press, 1953), p. 55.

and independent participation in politics.<sup>45</sup> As the party was organized, Section New York (containing all branches, German, American, or other) had the right of selection of the national committee. The Germans had a very substantial majority in New York City, and certainly more of them read the Volkszeitung (considered by most people as a party organ) than read the official German organ. The result was that they purged the entire national committee, including Rosenberg, the national secretary, and elected a new group. Rosenberg refused to recognize his dismissal, and repaired to Rochester, where he maintained a so-called Rochester Richtung.<sup>46</sup> It may be that a majority of the party members throughout the country were with Rosenberg and Busche, yet it cannot be questioned that under the constitution of the party the actions of the Volkszeitung group was legal. The Rosenberg Rochester Richtung managed to keep itself alive throughout the nineties, and eventually found its way into the Socialist Party. The split made the party more a 'foreign' instrument than before.

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<sup>45</sup>Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism, (Columbia, S. C.: U. of S. C. Press. 1953), p. 54-55.

<sup>46</sup>Rudolph Katz, "With De Leon Since '89" in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party; Daniel De Leon . . . A Symposium (4th ed.; New York: New York Labor News Co., 1934), II, 6.

The new national secretary was Benjamin Gretsches, a Russian law student, and he and Henry Kuhn were, at times, the only two on the National Executive Committee who could speak English.<sup>47</sup>

It was into this party that Daniel De Leon came in 1890.

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<sup>47</sup>Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon" in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work A Symposium (4th ed.; New York Labor News Co., 1934), I, 4.

### CHAPTER III

#### DE LEON AND DE LEONITE CHANGES

The events of De Leon's early life are not at all clear. According to his own account in The People<sup>1</sup> he was born in the West Indies on December 14, 1852, into a family which was rich enough to send him to Europe for his health and his schooling. He was schooled in Germany until the Franco-Prussian war, removing to Holland upon the outbreak of troubles.

His national origin has always been of some question. He himself claimed that he was the descendant of a Spanish-Venezuelan line,<sup>2</sup> but none of his opponents ever believed this, and some of his friends may have doubted it. The widespread assumption was that he was German--and some credence may be given to this view as it was a German Gymnasium in which he enrolled when he went to Europe as a youth. De Leon himself always expressly denied German blood, once stating that he was "not a German, either by birth, remotest ancestry, or collateral kinship."<sup>3</sup> Though he was often considered a German, his claim to Spanish

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<sup>1</sup>Daily People (New York), March 19, 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Olive M. Johnson, Daniel De Leon American Socialist Pathfinder (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1923), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>The People (New York), August 11, 1895.

descent has several arguments in its favor: (1) De Leon himself claimed it. (2) He knew Spanish well, apparently from an early age, even though Dutch was the predominant language of the islands during De Leon's childhood. (3) He helped edit a Cuban revolutionary paper in New York in 1873. Charles Madison, in his Critics and Crusaders, accepts the Spanish lineage view, and there is no factual evidence against it.<sup>4</sup> Yet always people with whom he associated considered him German. It may be that this was the result of his leadership of a predominantly German party.

De Leon's connection with socialist thought was of long standing, and most certainly he was a radical long before his entrance into Socialist Labor ranks. He is sometimes regarded as the source of the revolutionary socialist planks which were written into the George program in 1887<sup>5</sup> and certainly he emerges as a member of the socialist faction in the United Labor (Georgite) Party split in 1887, though he was not in a position of leadership in the faction at that time and is not even mentioned

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<sup>4</sup>N. Y.: Henry Holt, 1948, p. 471.

<sup>5</sup>Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism (Columbia, S.C.: USC Press, 1953), p. 43.



in the New York Times dispatches covering the split. It is probable that De Leon had his first real contacts with the Socialistic Labor Party while in George's United Labor Party. Among the prominent Socialist Laborites to be ejected from the party during the split were John Hickey of Troy, Matthew Maguire of New Jersey, and Hugo Vogt of New York.<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, the George Party, in spite of a large foreign element in its own ranks, took offense at the foreign nature of the S. L. P., declaring that the "Socialists are not to be recognized as an American political party."<sup>7</sup> There was ample opportunity for De Leon, had he wished to support the Socialistic Labor Party cause, to align himself with the Socialistic Labor Party members who were leading the anti-George revolt. There is no evidence that he did, and, in fact, he joined the Bellamy Nationalist movement rather than the S. L. P. That the Bellamy movement was not as thoroughly Marxist as was the party is obvious. One might question De Leon's doctrinaire sincerity in making such a move, but perhaps his thought had not, at that time, yet become as doctrinaire socialist as he later claimed it was. It is probable that De Leon wasn't interested in

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<sup>6</sup> New York Times, August 13 and 18, 1887.

<sup>7</sup> New York Times, August 12, 1887.

the party because it offered no apparent chance of success, and was not politically minded. The socialists, in general, approved of the Bellamy movement<sup>8</sup> and it seems certain that contact with the S. L. P. would continue during De Leon's stint as a Nationalist.

In 1890, with the decline of the Nationalist movement, De Leon joined the Socialist Labor Party. The party was happy to get someone with a professional background,<sup>9</sup> for the pre-De Leon party was not very class conscious, in spite of derogatory remarks on the American educational system. For that matter, the De Leon party never, to my knowledge, excluded anyone because of his occupation. In spite of the party experience that whenever a college professor would speak on socialism or any economic subject he was "utterly ignorant of that on which he proposes to speak"<sup>10</sup> party leadership seemed to like De Leon, and honored him by giving him the S. L. P. candidacy for Twenty-second District Assemblyman, New York,

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<sup>8</sup>Workman's Advocate (New York), March 15, 1890.

<sup>9</sup>De Leon was a lecturer at Columbia College for six years.

<sup>10</sup>The People (New York), April 4, 1892.

in 1890.<sup>11</sup>

He quickly became integrated into the propaganda or educational wing of the party, making up a socialist fact sheet for the New York Central Labor Federation<sup>12</sup> soon after joining the party.<sup>13</sup> De Leon's oratorical powers were also recognized, and he was sent on an agitational tour in 1891. In the fall of the same year, De Leon stumped New York state for the party ticket.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, he had also assumed the post of assistant to Lucien Sanial, the editor of the party paper. Although he obviously was immediately accepted by the party leadership, he apparently was slower in gaining a reputation among the rank and file, for in the voting for the party's delegate to the Brussels Conference De Leon was the low man among the six candidates,

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<sup>11</sup>Rudolph Katz, "With De Leon Since '89", in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (4th ed.; New York: New York Labor News Co., 1934), II, 9.

<sup>12</sup>The New York C. L. F. was a Socialist-dominated body which had separated from the allegedly "bourgeois" Central Labor Union in 1889. See The People (New York), September 3, 1893.

<sup>13</sup>G. D. H. Cole, Marxism and Anarchism 1850-1890 (London: Macmillan, 1954), p. 369.

<sup>14</sup>The People (New York), September 13, 1891.

receiving only nine votes to Sanial's 677.<sup>15</sup> In August of 1891 while Sanial was at Brussels, De Leon assumed temporary editorship of the paper. The modus vivendi thus created was confirmed when in February of 1892 Sanial resigned, to be replaced by De Leon.<sup>16</sup> This emergence of De Leon as editor of The People put him into a position of leadership he never relinquished.<sup>17</sup> He began to speak to party gatherings regularly, especially in his home district where he lectured each Sunday. He was very secure in his leadership of the party after the resignation as secretary of Benjamin Gretsck, on September 27, 1891, as Section New York<sup>18</sup> elected, on October 13th, a self-styled De Leonite, Henry Kuhn, to the post. Kuhn remained Secretary throughout the De Leon rule.

De Leon had several worries as he accepted leadership of the party, a position made concrete by the editorship

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<sup>15</sup>The People (New York), July 26, 1891.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., February 14, 1892.

<sup>17</sup>It is worth noting that De Leon never held a major national party office while leading the party. After De Leon's death, Arnold Petersen, Party Secretary, took over the reigns of control. In very recent years, history has repeated and it appears that the present editor of the Weekly People, Hass, is the leader.

<sup>18</sup>By the constitution, Section New York selects the National Executive Committee and the National Secretary.

of The People and the election of Kuhn. As leader, he felt that he must (1) remedy the essentially foreign nature of the party, (2) elevate the party press, (3) create a party economic arm, (4) redress the adverse cash balance which was constantly facing the party, and (5) bring to the organization a national unity and control such as it had not had previously. Of this five part program, only in the last point was De Leon completely successful.

As to Americanization, it is doubtful if De Leon, himself an immigrant, ever really understood the problem. Certainly a basic point that all labor leaders must recognize is the basic classlessness of American Labor. This fact distinguishes American labor from European. De Leon was never able to grasp such a view, and as a result his Americanization attempts failed as did those of those before him. Morris Hillquit points out, that, in spite of Van Patten's efforts, when he [Hillquit] joined the Socialist Labor Party

The net result of its Americanization efforts was represented by the publication of one English weekly, the Workman's Advocate, which had a circulation of less than fifteen hundred, mostly among self-sacrificing German comrades. Subsequently an "American Section" of the party was formed in New York. In our zeal for the cause, we did not appreciate the exquisite humor of a political party in the United States establishing a solitary "American Section" in the

metropolis of the country.<sup>19</sup>

Americanization remained an aim always, and certainly some followed Hillquit's example of transferring their memberships from a foreign branch to the American Section as soon as their English was sufficiently good.<sup>20</sup> Rosenberg, secretary of the party before the 1889 split, had said, in 1885, "Let us not conceal the truth: the Socialist Labor Party is only a German colony, an adjunct of the German-speaking Social Democracy." The fact is that in spite of the Americanizing plans, the party appeared more completely foreign in 1890 than upon its origin. In 1877, there had been 18 English-speaking sections, 35 German, 5 Scandinavian, 6 Bohemian, and 2 French. In 1893, counting branches and ward organizations as separate sections, there were 54 non-classified (certainly largely German), 65 German, 17 American,<sup>21</sup> and 21 of non-German foreign tongues.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Morris Hillquit, Loose Leaves From A Busy Life (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 44.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>21</sup>The word "American" in Socialist Labor circles, is synonymous with the concept "English-speaking."

<sup>22</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1893.

It had long been accepted by the party that the best method of Anglicizing membership lay in the printing and circulating of tracts in English.<sup>23</sup>

They had not, of course, neglected the other obvious way of becoming Americanized--that of naturalizing party members! A fight took place in the Convention of 1879-1880 over whether or not to restrict party office-holding to American citizens. The final determinant in deciding that "all members shall be eligible to any office or position in the party" was the fact that not enough leaders who were Americans were available.<sup>24</sup> It is typical of the doctrinaire thinking of the party that the alternative (allegedly a 'logical' alternative) to letting non-citizens hold office was their expulsion from the party!

When De Leon became the leading light in the party, he maintained the former party views. He really improved the English-language outlets, and he also encouraged naturalization. To get party members naturalized was not

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<sup>23</sup>Socialistic Labor Party, Platform, Constitution and Resolution together with a condensed report of the Proceedings of the National Convention, held at Allegheny, Pa. December 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 1879 and January 1, 1880 (Detroit: National Executive Committee, 1880), p. 13.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

always easy, as some judges held that membership in a socialist organization constituted a basis for denial of citizenship, on the grounds that the Socialist Labor Party "embodied aims that were inimical to the Constitution."<sup>25</sup> While De Leon constantly stressed the recruitment of English-speaking people, he was not blinded as to the real meaning of foreigners to the party. Though the party officially berated such men as Ed McSweeney, Assistant Commissioner of Immigration,<sup>26</sup> for allowing "Armenians and Italians" to come into New England to scab,<sup>27</sup> nonetheless it at times welcomed immigration. Immigration plus naturalization, thought De Leon, is the one certain way of building up the Socialist Labor vote. In an editorial in 1891 he cited the voting statistics of the recently-immigrated voters in the United States, and commented that

Politicians do not view these figures with satisfaction. They know that most of the new citizens who were born on the European

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<sup>25</sup>The People (New York), June 10, 1894.

<sup>26</sup>McSweeney, before joining the immigration service, had been a member of the Laster's Union, and the socialists had been instrumental in a Laster's strike in Lynn, Mass., and Auburn, Maine which was, at the time of the McSweeney condemnation, being broken by scab labor.

<sup>27</sup>The People (New York), September 22, 1893.



continent are wage workers in sympathy with the great international labor movement, and that the day must soon come when a majority of the votes of the American metropolis will be cast for the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>28</sup>

One of De Leon's major difficulties was in securing agitators who could propagandize in English. As late as 1894, four years after De Leon's entrance into the party, the Twelfth Assembly District organization published a special appeal in The People for all readers to attend Assembly District section meetings, because the party needed all the help it could get for agitation in the vernacular, and in the 12th District a majority of the population "belongs to the English-speaking element."<sup>29</sup>

De Leon and the national office seemed to be alternately pleased with and disheartened by the "Americanization" campaign. De Leon himself, from the moment of joining the party, took special pains to focus his work upon the "American" element. His first agitational tours were directed toward English-speaking groups, and it is significant that he assumed control of the English newspaper when taking over guidance of the party, rather than the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., June 28, 1891.

<sup>29</sup>October 30, 1894.

larger-circulationed German organ. The results of his early tours convinced De Leon that the American workmen were turning to socialism in ever-increasing numbers. "That the number of new American Sections," said De Leon, "should exceed that of the German ones is a most encouraging sign and one that must urge us to renewed efforts."<sup>30</sup> The rejoicing was over 23 new American sections and 19 German. This was, of course, at the very time that German immigration began to slack off, and many of the 23 American sections were not stable as the 1893 figures showed. When the New Jersey State S. L. P. Convention was held on July 12, 1891, it was noted with pride that, of the thirty-one delegates, one third were born in the United States, and "most of the others were sufficiently proficient in the English language."<sup>31</sup> In spite of these "good" omens, proficiency in the English language continued to make news in party circles. It is noted as an exception, for instance, when on a campaign tour in the fall of 1894, Alexander Jonas spoke in English at Utica, New York. He apparently used German in addressing all other socialist (not S. L. P.) rallies in Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester

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<sup>30</sup>The People (New York), January 24, 1892.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., July 19, 1891.

on the same trip.

Early in the same year, E. Kuerschner, agent for Section New York, had to urge the American branches to take a more active part in the New York City Assembly District Organizations. If they did so, Kuerschner pointed out,

it would soon be possible to conduct the business in English in most of the Districts, and thereby to promote the joining of large numbers of English-speaking workingmen. Such large accession of membership would so far strengthen the party as to justify the engaging of a permanent agent or organizer.<sup>32</sup>

Kuerschner himself participated in the Americanization campaign by dropping the "e" from his name.

The call upon the "American element,"<sup>33</sup> was largely in vain. The "American element" did not rally to De Leon's brand of socialism, and, when English-speaking people did join, they were apt to have independent ideas which made them unacceptable in the long run. In spite of rather glowing claims of "American" inroads on the part of The People, the movement to attract English-speaking people

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<sup>32</sup>The People (New York), February 11, 1894.

<sup>33</sup>It reflected the composition of the party, of course, when they called the English-speaking people of the United States an "element."

must be deemed a failure. The "American" minority within the party, furthermore, was a drawback to the De Leon aims. The appeal to Americans, in fact, seems to have sabotaged certain principles of the party, especially the class-consciousness thought to be necessary. For instance, according to reports submitted by one of the party's best agitators, Frank Gessner, a New England tour in 1893 was credited with having "a clean American Face" and with attracting not

only the underpaid wage earner, in the factories and mills, but also the professional men, doctors, lawyers, students, and here and there a minister of the gospel.<sup>34</sup>

It is obvious that it would be difficult to create a proletarian movement with such an array of talent. In spite of such a patent disability, De Leon remained supremely confident that the "American element" would come, in time, to dominate the group. In 1895 he cited the readership of The People as "overwhelmingly English-speaking, and not German." He apparently, in his optimism, didn't see the humor in an attempt to prove an English-language paper was read by English-speaking people. De Leon thought that the subscription lists of The People were the raw materials

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<sup>34</sup>The People (New York), November 5, 1893.

without which the historian of the future would be unable to record the spread of Socialism in America from 1891 onward.<sup>35</sup>

Even though De Leon often echoed Marx in noting that "socialism has nothing to do with nationalities"<sup>36</sup> he never saw anything inconsistent with Marxian principles in his appeal to English-speaking peoples. Many members of the party, however, felt that English-speaking dominance over the party was a mistake, and that party views were more apt to be held sacred by Europeans. Nearly everyone recognized and was proud of the fact that the party had been planted by Germans.<sup>37</sup> One of the outstanding party organizers in the nineties, Michael D. Fitzgerald, a Massachusetts poet, recorded that he noticed in Maine, as in other New England sections (in some of the same sections where Gessner had reported a clean American face) that the "American" socialists couldn't be relied on, but that "our German veteran Socialists were always in the harness for

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1895.

<sup>37</sup>See Ibid., October 28, 1894, and The New York World, October 21, 1894.

the work."<sup>38</sup> It was normally the American branches which violated one of the cardinal tenets of De Leonism, that of no cooperation with any reform parties. In San Francisco, for instance, the American section urged cooperation with the Populist Party; the German branch opposed the move and went on record as upholding the De Leonite purity of the party.<sup>39</sup> The secession of the Kangaroos in 1900 to the Social Democratic Party of Debs was widespread chiefly because the Socialist Labor Party, while concentrating its appeal on the "English-speaking element" failed to modify its party demands in accordance with the views of the American non-class conscious workman. Perhaps, as De Leon intimates, to compromise is to be defeated. But in this case not to compromise assured defeat. De Leon himself put the coup de grace upon his own attempt to attract Americans in 1900 when the immediate demands of the Socialist Labor Party were removed.<sup>40</sup> While the international orthodox socialist movement, in the Paris meeting

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<sup>38</sup>The People (New York), March 3, 1895.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1894.

<sup>40</sup>Rudolph Katz, "With De Leon Since '89", in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (4th ed.; New York: New York Labor News Co., 1934), II, 83ff.

of 1899, was moving toward a more moderate position in deciding to work within a human framework and, in certain special cases, to cooperate with capitalist ministries, the American Socialist Labor Party under De Leon was maintaining a pristine reserve, with no compromises and no bargains. Such a course made the tenets of the Socialist Labor Party forever untenable to the "American" workman. The Socialist Labor Party, then, failed to become an American Party, and, in the last years of the nineties, saw most of their "American" branches leave bodily for the Social Democrats.

The failure of De Leon to Americanize the party was obvious. His failure to capture or create an economic arm (either an old union or a new one of his own creation) was more spectacular, and will be taken up in the next two chapters.

As regards De Leon's attempt to establish a rigid discipline within the party, he was very successful. So successful, in fact, that his success in this area may have had much to do with his failures in his other aims. Under his guidance, the party set up rigidly strict discipline that has marked the party from De Leon till today. In the first place, the socialist movement could not exist, according to De Leon, outside the Socialist Labor Party.

He wrote, in answer to a socialist, but non-Socialist Labor Party correspondent,

To be a Socialist, but not to be a Socialist Labor Party man is like saying: "I want a thing so badly that I won't strive to get it." Those are the boys the capitalists like. Nine out of ten crooks we know are of your opinion. If the opinion has not yet seized on you too strongly to affect your character and prevent you from ridding yourself of it, cast it off quickly.<sup>41</sup>

Certainly such a tendency of absolute and exclusive righteousness can be seen in many differing organizations, but the extent to which absolute subservience to the organization was demanded in the Socialist Labor Party can be matched only in military organizations. De Leon was fully in accord with rigid discipline, and his ideas have dominated the Party. The primary duties of a Socialist Laborite reflect duties outlined by De Leon. The second duty<sup>42</sup> of a party member is to "observe strict party discipline."<sup>43</sup>

Theoretically, the dogmatic Marxism of the Socialist

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<sup>41</sup>The People (New York), October 27, 1895.

<sup>42</sup>Duties and attitudes of party members will be discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

<sup>43</sup>Arnold Petersen, Disruption and Disrupters (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1935), inside front cover.



Labor Party allowed for self-criticism, as did Marx himself. Max Forker, of Brooklyn, one of the party workhorses in the early nineties, put the theoretical official view well, when he wrote, in the report of his agitational report,

No right-minded Socialist will deny the right of a comrade, or of a paper, to criticize the party, its offices, or its official organs. Such criticism is necessary and proper, to the end clearing up any differences of opinion that may arise within the party.<sup>44</sup> But there is a limit that should not be crossed, where criticism ends, and the instigation of suspicion commences.<sup>45</sup>

Forker noted that there were some "suspensions" aroused, for to charge the National Executive Committee with "Bismarckian methods," as did the St. Louis Labor<sup>46</sup> in its March 16, 1895 issue, was to exceed the limit beyond which criticism was to go. Yet the St. Louis Labor had not challenged a single Marxian principle accepted by the party. It might be noted in passing, however, that if

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<sup>44</sup>On this point, note the a priori assumption that there should be no permanent differences of opinion within the party.

<sup>45</sup>Forker Report, The People (New York), April 14, 1895.

<sup>46</sup>A weekly edited by a pioneer Socialist Laborite, G. A. Hoehn. The paper was condemned by the party in 1896, and Hoehn and others ended up in the Socialist Party.

the criticism was outgoing from the National Executive Committee, rather than incoming, it could be vitriolic, to say the least. In one particularly caustic column De Leon characterized the socialists who had been charged by the party with wrong doing as a "half baker's dozen of gutter snipe reporters, . . . one Pollack who white-washed his name, . . . [and] one 250 pound perambulating scrap-book and historic junk shop."<sup>47</sup> Actually, the Pole referred to was M. C. Javoiski, who had changed his name to Norwood, and who had done much self-sacrificing work for the party, including holding party office in the Section Erie County (Buffalo) and the organization of a section in Binghamton.<sup>48</sup> His crime had been independence, in all probability, for he wanted to produce socialist propaganda locally, as well as to use the national literature of the party, feeling that locally written material was the cheapest and best method of advertising.<sup>49</sup>

The National Executive Committee, as stated before, was selected by Section New York. In effect, this gave the control of the national office to the New York City members,

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<sup>47</sup>Daniel De Leon, "Individuals and Elements of Strength", The People (New York), June 6, 1894.

<sup>48</sup>The People (New York), February 24, 1892.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1893.

and once selected, the N. E. C.'s will was unquestionable. This manner of selection was, of course, sometimes questioned by those outside New York. Several times re-organization of the N. E. C. was proposed, often with some support. Section Syracuse in the Fall of 1895 proposed a National Executive with representation from each organized state. It did so because it felt that

false ideas of economy and utility in the composition and selection of the National Executive Committee, have dwarfed the growth of a movement which in its nature is universal, has /sic/ impaired its usefulness and embroiled it in personal quarrels and local contests . . .<sup>50</sup>

Because of the outspoken opposition from the N. E. C. and The People,<sup>51</sup> the Syracuse resolutions were decisively beaten in a general vote of the entire membership, 909 to 371.<sup>52</sup> It is interesting to note that of those sections specifically designated as either German or American, i. e., English-speaking, the Americans voted 57 to 5 for the proposal, the Germans splitting 24 to 24. Apparently those who were thoroughly "Americanized" didn't appreciate the

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., September 25, 1895.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., September 15, 1895.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., December 15, 1895.

difficulties of a nation wide National Executive on the order of the major parties, even though the New York N. E. C. took pains to point them out in The People.

One of the staunchest supporters of the N. E. C. and its power, and a firm upholder of party discipline, in the nineties, was Thomas C. Brophy, of Boston. Brophy had several times risked the displeasure of his Massachusetts colleagues by defending the N. E. C., yet when Brophy, in 1899, proposed a state-represented N. E. C., De Leon contemptuously dismissed the idea, stating that an N. E. C. composed of members of different states "would bankrupt the party."<sup>53</sup>

Although De Leon was recruited from the ranks of the intelligentsia, and though the whole party prided itself (and still does) on the level of their thought and debate, oddly enough the Socialist Labor Party of the 1890's often had an anti-intellectual slant. De Leon, in his control of the S. L. P., would not allow an independent intellectual into the ranks, at least not for long. Prominent among those purged by the De Leonite party were those who were intellectually inclined--James F. Carey, Herbert N. Casson, Morris Hillquit, Squire E. Putney, and a host of others.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., January 22, 1899.

Everyone thrown out of the party was considered "garbage" "which grows like dunghills," regardless of the role he had played within the party. And the reasons for such individuals being thrown out was, according to the Party, in 99 cases of 100, that "they refused to be governed by the rules and the discipline of the Party," resulting from "their ignorance of the fundamentals of De Leonism."<sup>54</sup> De Leon, in one of his editorials on discipline, put the party attitude most clearly, when he wrote that people should bow

to the wise principle that a revolutionary movement, in order to be successful, must combine the elements of Order and Progress: it must keep Order while making Progress, and must make Progress while keeping Order. The vagabond freedom of individual minds, however much they may strain progressward, destroy that order without which there can be no oneness of action, hence no results; on the other hand, the exclusive stationariness of order impeded progress.<sup>55</sup>

In De Leon's theoretical view, progress and order were equally important. In actual practice, order was more important, and the party in the nineties spent much

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<sup>54</sup>Arnold Petersen, Disruption and Disrupters (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1935), p. 11.

<sup>55</sup>The People (New York), July 19, 1896.

more time establishing order than in making progress, with inevitable results, for order, in political parties, is not an American trait. The establishment of order meant, of course, rigid discipline and many purges. Scarcely a week went by in the nineties when some individuals or sections were not expelled from the party, for the sake of order. The most famous 'purge' was the so-called Kangaroo Exodus, when a large portion of the party left to join Debs's party, but there had been many smaller purges prior to this big split. Peculiarly enough, one of the expulsions had been of a member successful at the polls, James F. Carey, who had been elected alderman of Haverhill, Massachusetts in the December, 1897 municipal elections.<sup>56</sup> Though in a previous success (Matthew Maguire in Paterson, N. J.)<sup>57</sup> The People had devoted page after page to municipal council proceedings, after the Carey election they were strangely silent, in spite of the fact that Haverhill passed an eight hour law for street laborers, a reform far more advanced than any Maguire could point to.<sup>58</sup> But where Maguire often

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<sup>56</sup>The People (New York), December 12, 1897.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., April 15, 1894.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., August 7, 1898.

"packed" the meeting with supporters<sup>59</sup> and attempted some non-cooperation with the city council, Carey became a normal councilman, acting with independence. The national office was horrified when Carey assumed the presidency of the council, after an internal division had developed. Long before he had done anything specific in violation of the party constitution (though the national office somehow regarded accepting the presidency as a violation of its anti-fusion rules) Carey, and the whole section Haverhill with him, found themselves being disciplined by the national office, and hence resigned from the party.<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that there was no change in Carey's political or economic views--he remained a socialist throughout his life--and that the only real reason for his resignation from the party was to escape the intolerant and unthinking discipline of the organization.<sup>61</sup> For a time he tried to remain within the party, arguing that he had

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<sup>59</sup>The People (New York), May 13, 1894.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., March 6, 1898.

<sup>61</sup>He did not leave the party because of a vote for an armory, as cited in Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1826-1928 (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1928), p. 173., although this vote became the focus of later Socialist Labor Party invective against him.

personal freedom as an alderman, inasmuch as he claimed he was not elected by party votes, an undeniable fact in view of the small party membership in Haverhill. De Leon in no uncertain terms expressed his opinion that

James Carey's argument that he was not elected by the party . . . will not hold water . . . . To escape obligation to the party<sup>7</sup> of such an election on the ground that a successful party's active membership is not large enough to elect is the dodging of a crook. And this is Mr. Carey's attitude.<sup>62</sup>

Though De Leon often ranted on about the difference between the two major parties and the S. L. P., and though he was often careful to point out the exclusiveness of the S. L. P., in this case he was claiming that the party was like the capitalist parties, in that each vote cast for it was an entire endorsement of principles, and not of personnel. Such logic was, of course, fallacious, especially so on the local level. Even De Leon admitted it later in a first page article, when he acknowledged that events in Haverhill were proving Carey's point, and that Carey, "whomsoever he was elected by, was not elected by Socialists."<sup>63</sup> It was

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<sup>62</sup>The People (New York), July 3, 1898.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., August 7, 1898.



bitter medicine for De Leon when the "Carey Socialist" party, in December, 1898, carried the entire city of Haverhill, including the mayorship.<sup>64</sup>

An even more spectacular case concerning the intransigence of the party through its national leaders was in the Herbert N. Casson affair. Casson was a left wing Methodist preacher of Lynn, Massachusetts, who served the party well as an author, poet, preacher, and teacher. Casson's poems appeared regularly in The People, and many of them were effective.<sup>65</sup> Certainly Casson's ideas and methods were unusual--he had a rather unique ability to draw unusual lessons from mundane facts. As a party member, he became increasingly unwelcome in his Methodist parish, and finally he left it to build a "Labor Church," a project which garnered mild disapproval from some of his party friends.<sup>66</sup> Yet Casson went on with his church, as well as with his writings and poetry, though the last thing The People published of Casson's seems to be a challenge to Tom Watson of the Populists on June 30,

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., December 12, 1898.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 1893-1895 passim.

<sup>66</sup>See letter from fellow poet and friend Michael D. Fitzgerald of Lynn, Ibid., June 30, 1895.

1895.<sup>67</sup> No one can doubt that Casson was a good party man at that time, for he told Watson that (1) history nowhere proved that scientific socialism is a failure, (2) Watson's position ignored the evolution of industry, (3) Socialism was the "only possible basis of individual freedom" and (4) competitive democracy was impossible, a self-contradictory dream. A better statement of party beliefs could not have been made by De Leon himself. Nonetheless, Section Lynn ousted him October 2nd, 1895,<sup>68</sup> for crimes against the party allegedly committed on June 17th. The charge against him was printed in The People, but nothing was said in favor of Casson, for, as De Leon pointed out, the

Section has sole jurisdiction over its members, subject only to an appeal to the Grievance Committee. . . . When the Grievance Committee has spoken the matter ends; . . . <sup>69</sup>

When a Section has sentenced a member it is entitled to space . . . and there is no "other side" . . . except the side that the National Board of Grievances may present. . . .

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<sup>67</sup>An open letter of August 20, 1895, published in The People (New York), August 25, 1895.

<sup>68</sup>The People (New York), October 20, 1895.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., November 3, 1895.

Our columns are open to Board of Grievances. . . . to all other bodies or individuals these columns are shut, and the party's constitution holds the key. No Anarchy.<sup>70</sup>

Casson himself would not have protested his ouster; many members of Section Lynn did, however, with the result that a full case was presented to the Grievance Board. The Board was made up of Greater Boston people, in much the same way that the N. E. C. was composed of New York area residents. Under the leadership of David Taylor and Squire E. Putney,<sup>71</sup> the Board found in favor of Casson, and ordered him reinstated. T. C. Brophy supported the uncompromising view that Casson, because he had organized and conducted a discussion group open to the expression of all views, rather than allowing only those in support of the party line, was guilty. Brophy, and apparently De Leon also, thought it a crime against the party when the Massachusetts State Committee hired him for the Fall, 1895 campaign, in spite of the suspension by his section. The

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895.

<sup>71</sup>Putney was a pre-De Leon Socialist Laborite, long prominent in Massachusetts circles. Taylor attended Harvard Divinity School and was a graduate of Meadville Theological School in Pennsylvania. See Ibid., August 19 and September 30, 1895.

final report of the Grievance Board, as published by The People, gave one half column to the Putney majority report, and the rest of the page to the Brophy minority report.<sup>72</sup> Of the two campaigners hired by the Massachusetts state committee, Mrs. Merrifield and Casson, only the former's travels were followed in The People.<sup>73</sup> Significantly, John Wauters, a pro-Casson man, was relieved as secretary of the Grievance Board in favor of Brophy.<sup>74</sup> In spite of De Leon's statement that when the Grievance Committee has spoken the matter ends, nothing of Casson's ever appeared in The People after the charges by Section Lynn were brought, although he continued to write socialist literature and was officially still a party member in good standing. A small item in the N. E. C. minutes of September 15, 1896, a year later, records his final expulsion.<sup>75</sup> The paper was, however, open to statements against him, and Brophy supplied many.<sup>76</sup> The Casson decision brought to light the fact that the Grievance Board could overrule the national executive. Hence

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1895.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., October 13, 1895.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., September 20, 1896.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., March 28, 1897.

when there was trouble controlling certain party papers, notably the Jewish Arbeiterzeitung and the Abendblatt, the N. E. C. proposed that the Jewish press shall be under the "direct control of the N. E. C."<sup>77</sup> and that the National office (National Executive Committee) should also act as a Board of Grievances in case the papers' editors, although selected and hired by the N. E. C., should register any complaints about the editorial management.<sup>78</sup> The entire proposal was then submitted to a general referendum of the party members. Because it appeared to be an important question, the N. E. C. opened the pages of the Party Press to letters expressing opinions on both sides--and De Leon published them! In the six issues in which the debate lasted, thirteen arguments composing 208.5 column-inches were printed favoring the N. E. C. proposal, and ten articles 68.5 inches in length were given over to those in opposition.<sup>79</sup> Not only in the distribution of space did the N. E. C.'s show its highhandedness, but they refused to allow the letters of Louis E. Miller, a Jewish editor, to be printed, on the ground that his actions had "virtu-

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<sup>77</sup>The People (New York), April 11, 1897.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., April 11, 1897.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., April 18, 25, and May 9, 16, 23, 1897.

ally read himself out of the party and [was] unworthy of recognition."<sup>80</sup> The National Office barred him space in the paper in spite of the facts that he had paid his dues and that his section had taken no action against him at that time. Mrs. Antonina Konikow, of Boston, a member of the Massachusetts State Committee, was adamant against the N. E. C. proposal, noting that "Centralization is a good thing when it concerns management of things, but not of thoughts,"<sup>81</sup> and Mrs. Konikow certainly wasn't against centralization per se, for she had been one of the leaders in the dissolution of the Boston Russian Section and the formation of a more highly centralized Greater Boston Section.<sup>82</sup> After the arguments were all in, the vote sustained the N. E. C., 1572 to 538, with the opposition centering, strangely enough, in New York City.<sup>83</sup> During the debate over the disposition of control of the Jewish papers, the National Executive Committee didn't stress the centralization of the proposal, but rather unity of thought

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<sup>80</sup>N. E. C. meeting of April 20, reported in The People (New York), April 25, 1897.

<sup>81</sup>The People (New York), May 16, 1897.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., December 2, 1894.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., June 13, 1897.

and purpose. It is possible that they actually did not feel it was giving them excessive power, though Comrade Schlossberg pointed out that a vote for the proposal is a "vote for concentration of our powers . . . "84

It has been customary for historians to explain this concentration of power in terms of unity of doctrine, yet such an explanation doesn't fully explain the N. E. C. attitude. For the S. L. P. wanted members, and to get them was a difficult task. Strange as it may seem, the leaders of the party followed two very divergent practices in getting members. On the one hand, the party was "proud" that their appeal was so small and their numbers so limited.<sup>85</sup> On the other side, the party was willing to go through a great deal if there was a chance of success by any means. Thus the New Jersey State Committee told prospective converts that "we do not ask you to submit to discipline or incur risks in your business."<sup>86</sup> To the contrary, one didn't have to stand up and be counted, for it was appreciated even if there were formed a secret committee for

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., May 23, 1897.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., June 10, 1894.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., August 28, 1892.

the distribution of leaflets.<sup>87</sup> There was no rebuke from the N. E. C. for such a statement; to the contrary, the appearance of such an appeal in The People is some evidence that the N. E. C. approved of such a stand.

When the evidence is all assembled, it seems fair to judge that the Socialist Labor Party, in its national office, was more interested in control and power than in principle. It has always been the greatest weakness of the party that it cannot distinguish between the two. Thus it could remove Casson for personal reasons in spite of the fact he was still preaching the party line; it could violate the principles of its own constitution, if necessary, to maintain power undiluted. As a result of such an attitude on the part of the national executive, it has always forced independent or free thinking men from the party. To compensate, for this continual drain, it has had to rationalize its losses, an end accomplished in two ways.

First, the party rationalized by regarding the expelled as "disrupter-reptiles,"<sup>88</sup> "garbage,"<sup>89</sup> "culprits,"<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., August 28, 1892.

<sup>88</sup>Arnold Petersen, Disruption and Disrupters (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1935), p. 39.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>90</sup>The People (New York), January 31, 1892.



"dynamiters," and "Polish Jews and Anarchists."<sup>91</sup> The titles bestowed upon these men (who were not the bourgeois opposition, inasmuch as they were all socialists) are all indications that such characterizations were used to increase the emotional attachment of the regular S. L. P. member to the National office--they have little to do with well thought out scientific socialism. And when De Leon used such language, it is true that he was not using such invective and billingsgate for its own sake, as had been stated,<sup>92</sup> but it is equally true that he was not interested solely in purity of socialist principles. He was interested in maintaining party discipline and personal control.

Secondly, the party came to regard its cohesiveness, which in reality was the result of its unthinking adherence to the N. E. C. dictatorship, as the greatest asset in its favor; to confuse Socialist principle with rigid, united, and centralized control. For this reason, at the Chicago Convention in 1893, the party recommended to the membership that "all Sections connected with State organizations shall be connected with the national organization."<sup>93</sup> Such a

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., March 27, 1898.

<sup>92</sup>Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism (Columbia, S. C.: USC Press, 1953), p. 146.

<sup>93</sup>The People (New York), August 13, 1893.

resolution was later passed by a referendum, only 82 negative votes being cast.<sup>94</sup> The Ohio Party, in state convention, had previously passed a state constitutional amendment admitting to membership in the Ohio state organization all people who "subscribe to the fundamental principles of the party program." When the Ohio State Committee served notice that they were going to carry out the directions of the Ohio Convention,<sup>95</sup> the National Executive Committee moved swiftly, calling on Section Toledo (Toledo was the site of the Ohio State Committee) to bring charges against the State Committeemen, sending a paid agitator (Frank M. Gesser) into the state to "reorganize," holding a new state convention, and moving the site of the state committee to Cleveland.<sup>96</sup> The odd thing was that perhaps 1200 members of the party in Ohio went along with the changes! It can truthfully be said that one of the great fundamentals of De Leonism<sup>97</sup> is rigid party discipline, principles of belief being secondary to discipline. Verne L. Reynolds, the party's vice-presidential candidate in 1924,

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., October 29, 1893.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., June 10, 1894.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., July 1, 1894.

<sup>97</sup>Arnold Petersen, op. cit., p. 11.

gave this advice to new members

If the majority of the Party is against you, you must submit. On that thing you must be clear. Our liberty, our lives, and the revolution itself depends on a strict Party discipline.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Verne L. Reynolds, The Party's Work (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1925), p. 38.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE S. L. P., THE A. F. OF L., AND THE K. OF L.

The Socialist Labor Party has always regarded itself as the leader of class-conscious labor, regardless of the actual circumstances or labor affinities in the United States. The party members accept such leadership, even though the "led" may be non-existent, and the party has, at all times, called upon labor to follow the party leadership into the cooperative commonwealth. When the overwhelming mass of American labor failed to respond, the party attributed such a "reactionary" stand to ignorance, poor leadership in the union field, and actual corruption. The party cannot visualize anyone truly understanding and yet rejecting its philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

In the economic field (trades unionism) as in the political, the party cannot conceive of Marxian principles being spread except through its guidance and leadership. Marxian theorists in every country, of course, have considered themselves to be in a special relation to labor. Thus, Lassalle's first party was named the German Workingmen's Association, and similar "workingmen's" parties grew

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<sup>1</sup>It is difficult to understand this blindness on the part of party members, inasmuch as many members of their own National Executive Committee, who surely should "understand" the party principles, have rejected the party.

up in other European states. For this reason the Socialist Labor Party in the United States has jealously guarded the word "Labor" in its title.<sup>2</sup> De Leon often castigated the doctrinaire socialist who pointed out that in America labor was not class conscious or Marxist, and that hence to include "labor" in the title of the party was to dilute Marxian teachings. One correspondent told De Leon that he felt hurt at being "slighted by a socialist party," explaining that he believed in socialism, but that he was excluded from the party's ranks by the word "labor" in the title.<sup>3</sup> De Leon pointed out that only the capitalist should feel repelled by the word; the word was the shibboleth of all entitled to enlist in its ranks. Through the use of the word "labor", he went on to say, one could discover the enemy /presumably the socialist correspondent/ "who must be slain."<sup>4</sup> Again, the Minneapolis newspaper Progressive Age, of which De Leon approved,<sup>5</sup> stated that the American people would always distrust a "Labor Party", whereas a socialist party would "rapidly call to itself

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<sup>2</sup>The People (New York), March 25, 1894.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1894.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1894.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., March 3, 1895.

great strength."<sup>6</sup> De Leon laid the subject to rest in these words:

No! The Socialist Labor Party will not drop the word "Labor" from its name. It is not in the field to echo the ignorance of the ignorant, or to catch gulls. Its work is serious; its jaws are set; and it moves onward, its every step lighted, not by the penny tallow candles of dilettanteism, but by the steady light of the lamp of science.<sup>7</sup>

It is interesting to observe that De Leon was also unwilling to forgo the name "socialist," in order to make the party into a "Labor Party," as was often urged.<sup>8</sup>

De Leon's leadership, and hence the party leadership as well, could not picture true socialism except through the cooperation of organized labor. Nor could the party consider a labor organization a true one unless it were socialist in principle. Acting on such theoretical--and, in America, patently false--assumptions, De Leon and his party felt a strong desire either (1) to mold the organized labor movement into a socialist union by means of persuasion, agitation, or by gaining control of the movement,

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in The People (New York), December 8, 1895.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1895.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1894.

or, failing in this, (2) to establish a union on purely Marxist principles. Such a union, they felt, would eventually (and inevitably) grow to be the leader in the labor movement. In trying to accomplish both of these goals, there were times when the ultimate party aim (the socialist revolution) was but dimly seen. Indeed, one can almost assume a third alternative: De Leon wanted a personal position of leadership in the American labor movement, and was willing to sacrifice principle to get it.

In pursuit of its objectives, the Socialist Labor Party, in the 1880's and 1890's, worked out two basic methods of "capturing" organized labor, both of which violated the Marxist principles to which the party was formally dedicated. First, the party felt it was good practice to assume control of a union, even though the socialists were in a minority. In so doing the Socialist Laborites were apt to make alliances with dissatisfied non-socialist elements within the unions, even though such alliances were expressly forbidden by the party constitution. For instance, under De Leon's leadership, the Socialist Laborites united with the agricultural bloc (which was composed in general of the much-hated Populists)

in the Knights of Labor General Assembly in 1893.<sup>9</sup>

Second, the Socialist Laborites under De Leon often tried to discredit the leadership of an organization in the hope that the rank and file of the group would depose it and shift to socialist-supported leadership. Thus De Leon felt it was a primary duty to expel the "rascals," "of low moral and intellectual achievement," who were "posing as leaders of labor."<sup>10</sup> To oust such men, he felt, was "the duty of every man who has at heart the emancipation of the toilers of America."<sup>11</sup> A list of those considered "rascals" by De Leon would include virtually every great labor leader in America.

After De Leon's accession to the party leadership in 1890, both of the methods were employed, but with no great success. In fact, the De Leon party of the nineties had less success in this respect than had the "non-political" party of the eighties. It is natural that the Socialist Labor Party, in finding a union adjunct, should have turned to the Knights of Labor. This was understand-

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<sup>9</sup>Norman J. Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895 (New York and London: D. Appleton & Co., 1929), p. 369.

<sup>10</sup>The People (New York), December 15, 1895.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., December 15, 1895.



able inasmuch as the party had always recognized and advocated industrial unionism, and also because of the all-inclusiveness of the Knights.

The Knights of Labor had a rather unique organization. It contained mixed assemblies, that were open to almost any individual who cared to join and trade assemblies consisting of one trade only. The mixed assembly, with virtually no requirements for membership, offered an ideal opportunity for infiltration and agitation. The existence of mixed district assemblies, which usually contained both mixed and trade local assemblies, provided the socialists with ample contacts with regular trade unions. This was especially true as the Knights of Labor did not object to its trade assemblies being affiliated with other national unions. And it must be noted also that a class-conscious socialist would be more likely to join the Knights of Labor than would an ordinary citizen.

For these reasons, the Knights of Labor, almost from its creation, contained a heavy percentage of socialists. In many cases the socialist Knights assumed positions of leadership in the organization, especially on the district level. In New York City the socialists were particularly successful in assuming control of the Knights of Labor

organization, though not necessarily doing so in their role as party members. Local Assembly 1562, a mixed local in New York, was long a socialistic organization. In 1884, within L. A. 1562, party members established a so-called "Home Club" which soon succeeded in establishing socialist control in District Assembly 49, the largest in the Order. At one time (1886) the Home Club succeeded in controlling the national organization itself.<sup>12</sup>

In the early nineties, a reorganized "inner circle," consisting of party members within mixed Local Assembly 1563, apparently did come under party discipline. This may have been what David S. Heimerdinger, a member of Cigarmakers' local union 90 (German) was referring to when he accused De Leon of administering party affairs from a small inner group called the "Triangle."<sup>13</sup> De Leon always insisted, however, that there was no cabal, but that the Triangle was merely a social group which met at its

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<sup>12</sup>The original group of Home Clubbers were all party members, and included the then District Master Workman of D. A. 49, T. B. McGuire. That the activities of the Home Club were not strictly for party controlled infiltration, however, can be seen from the fact that Philip Van Patten himself had opposed the delegates from L. A. 1562 at a Knights of Labor General Assembly. Norman Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States (New York: Appleton, 1929), pp. 105 and 111.

<sup>13</sup>The People (New York), October 4, 1896.

members' homes for relaxation and enjoyment.<sup>14</sup> Whether or not it was this inner group which controlled D. A. 49, it is certain the party influence in the District Assembly was very strong. This indicated by the fact that a roster of assembly officers could also serve as a list of Socialist Labor Party speakers and agitators.

The socialists tried hard to capture the national movement by working through D. A. 49. They also, from the early eighties through the nineties, made concerted efforts to influence and control the New York City labor movement. They were successful in organizing the Central Labor Union in that city. As seems to be inevitable in all socialist groups, this central body split in 1889. The more radical socialists, under the firm direction of the Socialist Labor Party, left the Central Labor Union and formed the Central Labor Federation.<sup>15</sup> The C. L. F. was at first a success, due in large measure to the decision of the United German Trades to join it. The German Trades, of course, had a much heavier percentage of party members than did most

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1896. Nonetheless, the Triangle Club was fully organized with club officers and committees on a rather formal basis. Ibid., April 28, 1895.

<sup>15</sup>For the history of the New York Central Labor Federation, see Ibid., September 3, 1893.

trade union bodies. In December, 1889, in order to concentrate the labor forces of the city, the C. L. F. rejoined its parent body, and gave up its recently received charter from the American Federation of Labor. The rapprochement lasted less than a year, when the militant socialists again took the C. L. F. out of the Central Labor Union, and, in June, 1890, applied to Gompers for the return of their A. F. of L. charter. Meanwhile, Henry Emrich--a socialist but a friend of Gompers--the treasurer of the A. F. of L., to whom the charter had been entrusted, had turned over the old charter to Gompers.<sup>16</sup> Gompers took the legally defensible but generally unused position that the reorganized C. L. F. could not regain its "surrendered" charter but had to apply for a new one. Though Gompers used the term "surrendered" when referring to the C. L. F. action in regard to the old charter, a letter to Gompers, dated August 11, 1890, from Ernest Bohm, Socialist Labor Party member and long-time secretary of the C. L. F. indicates that the charter was given to Gompers for "safe-keeping" pending a final decision on the part of the

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<sup>16</sup>Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor, revised and edited by Philip Taft and John A. Sessions (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1957), p. 213.

C. L. F.<sup>17</sup> When a new application for a charter was filed, Gompers refused to issue it on the grounds that the New York Central Labor Federation was not a trade union agency, as one of its constituent "unions" was the New York American Section of the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>18</sup> The A. F. of L. Executive Council sustained Gompers' ruling, and Gompers, in the eyes of the Socialist Labor Party, became the most hated of all labor leaders.

The Socialist Labor Party, of course, did have some members in good standing in the A. F. of L. through other affiliated unions. The party decided, therefore, to send Lucien Sanial, the party editor, to the 1890 Detroit Convention of the A. F. of L. as a C. L. F. delegate. It was hoped that party members and other socialists could swing enough votes to reverse Gompers' ruling and seat Sanial.

The question of seating Sanial became the hottest issue of the convention. John McBride's (United Mine Workers' Union) motion to grant Sanial privilege of the

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<sup>17</sup>Executive Council, A. F. of L., Report of Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor held at Detroit, Michigan, December 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13, 1890 (Bloomington, Ill.; Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co., 1905), p. 12n.

<sup>18</sup>Samuel Gompers, op. cit., p. 216.

floor was passed by a narrow margin.<sup>19</sup> Sanial's speech in defense of his seat was logical and unemotional. His telling points were his stress on desire for cooperation rather than disruption, and his insistence that the Socialist Labor Party was not a political party!<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for the party, Sanial stated that the A. F. of L. had received delegates from the Baltimore Federation of Labor, in which the party was represented--a statement that was shown to be false.<sup>21</sup> Thomas J. Morgan, a Chicago socialist, tried hard to maneuver the convention into seating Sanial. Few people, however, were as adept in parliamentary procedure as President Gompers, and the attempt failed, with only eighteen delegates favoring Sanial. The United Mine Workers' delegation, led by John McBride, gave Sanial over two-thirds of his votes.<sup>22</sup> When Morgan was nominated for president to oppose Gompers, however, none of the Mine Workers supported him, and he gained the votes of only

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<sup>19</sup>Executive Council, A. F. of L., *op. cit.*, p. 12. Although McBride was not a socialist, this action was recalled when the socialists removed Gompers in favor of McBride for a year, in 1895.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 12-13.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

sixteen socialist delegates.<sup>23</sup>

It was during the Detroit Convention, while opposing the seating of Sanial, that Gompers originated the term "pure and simple" to describe his type of trade unionist,<sup>24</sup> i. e., one who opposes independent political action or outright political affiliation. Usage of the term was adopted by both sides, by the left in derision and by the right in commendation. Gompers, when claiming the authorship, appeared to be very proud of the phrase.<sup>25</sup>

Though the C. L. F. was thus frustrated in its bid for recognition by the A. F. of L., it continued to operate in New York City. However, the pro-Gompers group seceded to form the New York Federation of Labor. Officially, the Socialist Labor Party was glad to see them go as a means of self-purification. One might wonder why party members offered such a spirited defense at Detroit if such purification were a good thing. At any rate, the party editor, in observing the events, was gratified that the labor movement was at last "firmly advancing in the right

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>25</sup>Samuel Gompers, op. cit., p. 216.

direction"<sup>26</sup> and that the C. L. F. had at last eliminated "scabbism!" He went on to rejoice over the fact that

united the Central Labor Federation and the Socialist Labor Party have a strength in the labor movement which the plain meaning of their union alone can give them. This strength will soon be felt throughout the country.<sup>27</sup>

The Gompers' group, the New York Federation of Labor, was eventually reamalgamated with the Central Labor Union.<sup>28</sup> In many ways this controversy between the party and the A. F. of L. paralleled the earlier fight in the 1880's when the Home Club attempted to take over the Knights of Labor. Even some personnel on the side of the Socialist Laborites was identical in the persons of T. B. McGuire and Theodore Cuno.<sup>29</sup>

The position of the New York Central Labor Federation as a force in the national labor movement was greatly hampered by the rejection by Gompers and the A. F. of L. Many socialists within the party began to question

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<sup>26</sup>The People (New York), August 2, 1891. This absurd rationalization was one customarily taken by the party.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1891.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., August 5, 1894.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., August 5, 1894.



whether or not party representation in the central body was worth the handicap that was inevitably gained in the view of American labor. Partly through Gompers' influence, a call was issued in August, 1891, by the Bakers' Union #7, Clothing Cutters' Union #4, and the United Garment Workers, for laboring people to unite and stem the socialist tendencies of the Central Labor Federation. In retaliation, De Leon, editor of the party organ in Sanial's absence, urged every socialist who was a man to "stand to his guns."<sup>30</sup> In spite of bravado about purification and socialist duties, many members of the party continued to worry about the future of the Socialist Labor Party in organized labor.

In November, 1891, therefore, the Brooklyn, Hudson Co., N. J., and New York sections of the Socialist Labor Party held a joint meeting to discuss whether it was proper for the party to be represented in trade union organizations.<sup>31</sup> Several prominent party members favored withdrawal from the Central Labor Federation. Included among them was Henry Stahl, a cigarmaker and a member of local Cigarmakers' Union #90. As a member of this German Union,

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., August 16, 1891.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1891.

Stahl must certainly have known Gompers, a member of local Union #15 (English), as the two unions cooperated a great deal, and both unions were members of the Cigarmakers' International Union (C. M. I. U.). Stahl was to become, for six years, a member of the Socialist Labor Party's National Executive Committee, and was a real workhorse for the party. It was Stahl's contention that the

party should not put itself upon the plane of the trades unions. It stood above the trade unions by reason of its higher aims and its political character.<sup>32</sup>

It should be noted that Gompers' position is very close to Stahl's. Gompers never really rejected the principle of class consciousness. He did say that it was not fundamental or inherent in many public utterances,<sup>33</sup> but at the same time Gompers, like many Marxians, was convinced of the necessity for international solidarity of labor against those "who hold control over the lives and opportunities of those who work for wages."<sup>34</sup> Gompers admitted that such a class-conscious concept was the

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., November 29, 1891.

<sup>33</sup>Samuel Gompers, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

"dominating influence in shaping" his life.<sup>35</sup> At the same time Gompers, like Stahl, did not care to see the economic struggle of the trades unions connected with the political struggle against the bourgeois system. The A. F. of L. leader, furthermore, acted as he did in the Sanial case, not because of constitutional legalism, for Gompers never supported technicalities, but because he personally thought that representation by political agencies in labor unions was deleterious to the labor movement.<sup>36</sup>

Because of the widespread interest, a referendum of the party membership on the question of party representation in trade union bodies followed the defeat in the A. F. of L. The referendum confirmed Stahl's views against sending delegates to the C. L. F. The party editor, chagrined to find that even within the party there was a majority of Gompers' supporters on the issue, rationalized the action taken by the party in an editorial:

It is not a repudiation of the fundamental principle that the economic forces of labor must be united for independent political action on socialistic lines, . . . much less is it [an okehing] pure and simple, . . .

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

least of all is it surrender or apology.

It is simply a declaration that the party will not stand for a moment in the way of economic union between workingmen.<sup>37</sup>

Overt party representation in labor unions thus stopped in 1891, and the Socialist Laborites then had to rely on individual infiltration, and upon their individual union memberships as workers to instill Marxian principles into the labor movement. Oddly enough, socialist resolutions were passed as readily in the Central Labor Federation without actual party representation as they had been previously.<sup>38</sup> The C. L. F. was as closely aligned with the party as before.

In 1893, when Gompers accused the Central Labor Federation of being a tail to the Socialist Labor Party, the Central Labor Federation was very pleased, saying that such an accusation proved that the central body was on the "right track." The C. L. F. also, inconceivably, felt that such a charge proved that Gompers' pure and simple "pap" was "in danger of being annihilated."<sup>39</sup> The charge by Gompers was certainly truthful; in April, 1893, the C. L. F.

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<sup>37</sup>The People (New York), December 20, 1891.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 1892 passim.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., June 4, 1893.

constitution had been revised in order to reflect more fully the Socialist Labor Party line.<sup>40</sup> The C. L. F., in many resolutions, had stated that "the platform of the Socialist Labor Party of the U. S. . . . was the only method by which the final emancipation of labor can be accomplished."<sup>41</sup> After the revision of the C. L. F. constitution, it provided safeguards so that none but socialists<sup>42</sup> could legally get into the Central Labor Federation. According to Article II, paragraph 4, of the C. L. F. constitution, every delegate to the Federation had to give an affirmative answer to the following question:

1. Do you regard it as a sacred duty of every laboring man to sever his affiliations directly or indirectly with all political parties of the capitalists?<sup>43</sup>

2. Do you solemnly swear and sincerely pledge your work and honor as a man that

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., April 30, 1893.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., January 21, 1894.

<sup>42</sup> It did not however, specify Socialist Labor Party membership.

<sup>43</sup> This included the Democratic, Republican, Populist, Prohibition, Georgite Single Tax, and Greenback, as well as local "reform" parties.

you will obey the rules and regulations of the Central Labor Federation and to the best of your ability perform all duties as a member thereof?<sup>44</sup>

It might be added that all party members knew that "indirectly" in the first question modified "affiliations" in spite of the rather peculiar grammar!

The C. L. F. further showed its reliance on the party and contempt for the regular organized trade union movement by adopting the De Leon-inspired slogan:

Leave the Poor Old Stranded Wreck, (Trade Unionism Pure and Simple) And Pull for the Shore.<sup>45</sup>

The central body tried actions to live up to the slogan. If individual members of the C. L. F. weren't sure that the pure and simple unions were already wrecks, it was their duty to help make them so. In C. L. F. thought, a campaign to wreck pure and simple unions was not anti-labor, as the pure and simple unions weren't really bona fide unions at all!

After the rejection by Gompers, the New York Central Labor Federation made no further attempt to join the A. F.

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<sup>44</sup>The People (New York), April 28, 1895.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., November 12, 1893.

of L., even though technically, when the party representation was officially terminated, it could have done so. Many of the member unions in the C. L. F. were affiliated with the A. F. of L., however, and remained so until the formation of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance in 1895. Consequently, there were generally one or two "New York socialists" at each A. F. of L. convention. The National Conventions of the A. F. of L. throughout the nineties showed unsuccessful attempts on the part of these socialists to influence the A. F. of L. Before the convention of 1893, in Chicago, some of the local unions controlled by New York Socialists tried to exact pledges from their national bodies to compel convention delegates to vote for independent socialist political action.<sup>46</sup> These attempts apparently influenced very few national bodies, however.

Thomas J. Morgan, Socialist Labor Party member and delegate of the International Machinists' Union from Chicago, was again the leader of the Socialists at the

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., December 3, 1893.

1893 Convention.<sup>47</sup> Morgan was a member of the Committee on Resolutions, and he put through his committee an eleven-planked resolution supporting political action. The preamble to the resolution cited the example of independent political action by British labor, referring to the Independent Labour Party,<sup>48</sup> but it contained only three socialistic planks, which proposed:

8. The municipal ownership of street cars, and gas and electric plants for the public distribution of light, heat, and power.

9. The nationalization of telegraph, telephone, railroads and mines.

10. The collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution.<sup>49</sup>

The resolution, contrary to the later claims of the party,<sup>50</sup> did not contain any reference to independent

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<sup>47</sup>American Federation of Labor, Report of Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor held at Chicago, Ill., December 11th to 19th inclusive, 1893 (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p. 7.

<sup>48</sup>The reference commended a trade union body for taking independent political action, by the formation of a political party.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>50</sup>The People (New York), November 25, 1894.



political action, except for the broad appreciation of the British movement in the preamble. It was not in any way an endorsement of the Socialist Labor Party, even though a party member had introduced it. The Committee on Resolutions recommended that the resolution, after debate by the Convention, be referred to the member unions for "favorable action." The conservative majority of the Convention, however, eliminated the word "favorable", 1253 to 1182, even though 54 of the 84 delegates voting favored its retention.<sup>51</sup> The voting was not along socialist anti-socialist lines, as many of the so-called conservatives, such as Reichers, Pomeroy, Duncan, and Furuseth, voted for the Morgan wording, and some of the large liberal unions, such as the United Mine Workers and the Cigarmakers' International Union, were split.<sup>52</sup>

Through the referendum, it was assumed that all delegates to the 1894 Convention would be instructed by their individual unions, and that definitive action could then be taken on the Morgan resolution. The Socialist Labor Party has always maintained that the results of the

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<sup>51</sup>A. F. of L., Proceedings of the Thirteenth Convention, Chicago (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p. 38.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

referendum showed that the member unions of the A. F. of L. gave approval to the resolution, and especially to plank 10.<sup>53</sup> The party thus claimed that the labor organization was in favor of independent, and presumably Socialist Labor, political action, in spite of the wording of the resolution and the nature of the referendum.<sup>54</sup>

When the A. F. of L. Convention opened in 1894, the socialist delegation had not been increased in numbers, though the presence of party member John F. Tobin, of the Boot and Shoe Workers' International Union, helped build up the prestige of the socialist faction.<sup>55</sup> When Morgan's political resolution was taken up, Strasser moved to strike the preamble.<sup>56</sup> Strasser's motion prevailed, 1345 to 861, after some clever maneuvering by Gompers had overruled Socialist Labor Party member J. Mahlon Barnes,

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<sup>53</sup>The S. L. P. contention on this point is generally granted by historians. See John R. Commons, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1926), II, 512.

<sup>54</sup>The People (New York), November 25, 1894.

<sup>55</sup>National Executive Council, Report of Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor held at Denver, Colorado, December 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18, 1894 (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p. 7.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

a Philadelphia Cigarmakers' delegate. The United Mine Workers' delegates were the only large group whose votes were cast against the Strasser proposal.<sup>57</sup> When the vote on the main political resolution was taken by planks, both plank 8 and plank 9 passed easily--indicating that the A. F. of L. was in favor of a rather extreme "light and water" socialism, if not for the Marxian brand of the Socialist Labor Party. However, a substitute was adopted in place of the original plank 10 which put the A. F. of L. on record as opposed to unrestricted private property in land.<sup>58</sup> In a strange action, the Convention then rejected the entire program that it had just adopted plank by plank. In the year 1895, this made for a curious division of opinion between the socialists, who insisted the A. F. of L. stand by the planks, and the conservatives, who held that the organization had no political program.<sup>59</sup>

The actions of Gompers throughout the Convention were such as to alienate all socialists. Even though most of them, including party members Morgan and

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<sup>57</sup>National Executive Council, Report . . . Fourteenth Annual Convention . . . Denver, December, 1894, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>59</sup>The People (New York), December 23, 1895 and June 17, 1895.

Bechtold,<sup>60</sup> had voted for Gompers in 1893, against McBride, they all switched to McBride in 1894, giving the latter enough votes to defeat Gompers for the presidency, 1170 to 976.<sup>61</sup>

The results of the 1894 Convention, as far as the political resolutions were concerned, were in doubt, as to their meaning, if not as to the vote totals cast. The Socialist Labor Party insisted that the votes of the member unions on the resolutions were binding on the A. F. of L. delegates,<sup>62</sup> but temporary chairman McBride ruled otherwise and was upheld by the Convention. The People failed completely to give notice to the socialistic planks passed, and instead De Leon satisfied himself with a vicious editorial, in which he grouped Powderly (who had lost his position as Master Workman of the Knights of Labor) and Gompers. He noted that each man,

weak of fibre and wholly unequipped with  
the needed positive and theoretic information,  
... became the toy of the social

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<sup>60</sup>Of the Brewers' Union.

<sup>61</sup>National Executive Council, Proceedings of the Fourteenth Convention, A. F. of L., Denver (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), pp. 41-42.

<sup>62</sup>The People (New York), December 23, 1894.

storms that broke over the land, instead of being their ruling spirits; characterless, they clung to their jobs long after they had realized their impotence. Owing to mental and physical weakness, both lost all confidence in the worker's capacity to free himself, and determined to feather their own nests and look out for their own skin, though that be done at the cost of their confiding followers. . . . Their defeat means progress.<sup>63</sup>

A rather unusual and wholly unwarranted reaction on the part of De Leon after the 1894 convention was his condemnation of Morgan, fellow comrade who had been the foremost worker for the party program in the convention. A split in the socialist ranks in Chicago in 1894 had resulted in Morgan's leading a coalition, without sacrifice of socialist principles, under a Peoples' Party banner, that polled a respectable 30,000 votes. The People did not chide the socialists when the results were in. When the off-year election of April, 1895, however, didn't measure up to the former showing, De Leon blamed it on "confused, vain, ill-drilled, designing and erratic men and lightweights like Thomas J. Morgan."<sup>64</sup> In his editorial, De Leon in effect read Morgan out of the party

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., December 23, 1894.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., April 14, 1895.

(prematurely, as it turned out, for Morgan remained a member for three more years), but regarded the loss in total vote in Chicago as an "invigorating experience" for the party sections.<sup>65</sup> Morgan apparently took the attack stoically, for he continued to work for Socialist Labor principles in organized labor, later even advising groups to join the party's Trade and Labor Alliance.<sup>66</sup>

Though De Leon never seems to have concentrated his infiltration tactics upon the A. F. of L. as he did upon the K. of L., still, after the defeat of Gompers in the 1894 Convention, he recognized that there was certainly a chance that the socialists could become dominant in the union. He realized full well that it was western agrarian sentiment that had been indispensable in electing McBride; nonetheless under De Leon's leadership the party started, through its press, to aim more actively toward the infiltration of the A. F. of L. At the New York State Convention of the A. F. of L. in 1895, party members were well organized and put forward a resolution calling for independent political action, with a view toward collective

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<sup>65</sup>The People (New York), April 14, 1895.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., March 8, 1896.

ownership.<sup>67</sup> Gompers, a delegate, with the help of John J. Junio, state A. F. of L. president, managed to beat the Socialist Laborites, but they were forced into two hours of acrimonious debate. In the course of the debate, Gompers accurately noted the real aim of the party, noting that the Socialist Labor Party, "the disrupter of trade unions, is endeavoring . . . to make the A. F. of L. the tail to their kite."<sup>68</sup> Gompers' chief opposition from the socialists was David Heimerdinger, a fellow cigarworker, who introduced the party's resolutions but who, like Morgan, was soon to be very severely criticized by his own group.<sup>69</sup> Though the failure to capture the New York State Convention ended practical chances the party had of gaining control of the union, it kept up a running barrage of agitational articles for a year. The People claimed that the political platform had been passed in the 1894 A. F. of L. Convention and that the referendum vote of 1894 showed that the rank and file of the union members favored the original plank 10.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., January 27, 1895.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., January 27, 1895.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1896.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 1895 passim.

When the 1895 Convention of the A. F. of L. opened, only John F. Tobin and J. Mahlon Barnes, of the important A. F. of L. delegates, were still party members. Tobin, in spite of the fact that he had publicly apologized to the party for his 1890 action in opposing Sanial's credentials,<sup>71</sup> was at heart a moderate who caused little trouble in the convention. Barnes was, in practice, the only strong party man in the assembly.

President McBride, as a leader of the socialistically-inclined United Mine Workers, was naturally cautious in his political statements. He opened his presidential report, therefore, by stating that the very existence of a political platform was a disputed question.<sup>72</sup> McBride's statements seemed to recommend some type of political program, though certainly they did not call for outright independent political action. Barnes did introduce a motion, on behalf of the party, but it got nowhere.<sup>73</sup> There were but three votes taken wherein the Convention

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., June 17, 1894.

<sup>72</sup>American Federation of Labor, Report of Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, held at New York, N. Y., December 9th to 17th inclusive, 1895 (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p 15.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 62.



had occasion to divide between the socialists, who favored outright political action, and the anti-socialist pure and simplers: (1) The vote on Pomeroy's motion that the A. F. of L. had no political program.<sup>74</sup> (2) The vote on O'Sullivan's motion that

this convention declares that party politics, whether they be democratic, republican, socialistic, populist, prohibition, or any other, should have no place in the convention of the A. F. of L.<sup>75</sup>

(3) The vote for president between McBride and Gompers.<sup>76</sup> Only five delegates, with 93 votes (and Barnes held 69 of these) were found voting on the doctrinaire socialist side of all three issues.<sup>77</sup> The lack of a significant doctrinaire socialist vote did not mean that there were few delegates favorable to political action, but that the organized Socialist Labor attempts to influence the Federation were fruitless. There were many delegates who

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-67.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>77</sup>Barnes, 69 votes, Cigarmakers'; Kennehan, 20, Horse-shoers'; Mailly, 1, Birmingham Trade Council; McCambridge, 1, Federal Labor Union; Wieman, 1, Milwaukee Federated Trades Council.

avored some type of political action. The McBride-Gompers election contest reflected, to a great degree, the division, with those who supported political action being favorable to McBride. The Convention was very evenly divided on the question. It illustrates the closeness to point out that without his own vote, Gompers would have been defeated. Had McBride wished to retain office, in fact, he could have voted his own uncast ballot and been elected, regardless of Gompers' vote.<sup>78</sup>

Inasmuch as the Fifteenth A. F. of L. Convention was held in New York, it was perfectly suited for party agitation, if not for infiltration. The party was able, when the Federation had a public meeting in Cooper Union, to "pack" the meeting.<sup>79</sup> De Leon, at the time of the New York Convention, was in the process of forming the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. In doing so, the Socialist Labor Party scheduled a mass meeting to follow the A. F. of L.'s on December 13th. The Socialist Laborites,

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<sup>78</sup>A. F. of L., Proceedings of the Fifteenth Convention, New York (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p. 70.

<sup>79</sup>De Leon saw nothing morally wrong with this "packing" and congratulated the party for having "packed" the hall. The People (New York), December 22, 1895.

clearly showing their real intentions toward the A. F. of L., had installed a banner above the chairman's head which read

Wreck the Old Trade Unions  
Pull for the Shore of Socialism<sup>80</sup>

The meeting was advertised by handbills that were distributed among A. F. of L. delegates, and many A. F. of L. men attended. The audience at Cooper Union pledged itself by resolution to leave all other unions in favor of the newly created one. Gompers pointed out to the convention that some A. F. of L. delegates while attending the A. F. of L. Convention had actually participated in such a pledge!<sup>81</sup> Federation delegates Barnes and Tobin, in fact, were featured speakers at the Cooper Union meeting, and both endorsed the new socialist union.<sup>82</sup> Though there was much enthusiasm for the new alliance at the Cooper Union gathering, when it came to the actual choice, and member unions had to choose between the old A. F. of L. and the

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<sup>80</sup>William C. Roberts, comp., American Federation of Labor History Encyclopedia Reference Book (no pl.: A. F. of L., 1919), I, 38.

<sup>81</sup>A. F. of L., Proceedings of the Fifteenth Convention New York (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph, 1905), p. 65, and The People (New York), December 22, 1895.

<sup>82</sup>See below, p. 133.

new Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, union after union aligned itself with the A. F. of L.<sup>83</sup>

After the defeat of McBride, Socialist Laborite infiltration into the A. F. of L. virtually stopped, and consisted only of sporadic attempts to gain control of individual member unions. The People, of course, continued a running depreciation of Gompers' ability. But by and large the party concentrated on the problems of the new Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, the party labor union created at the Cooper Union meeting.

De Leon was the originator of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. The new union was created when his pocket Knights of Labor District Assembly, #49, failed in its bid to control the 1895 K. of L. Convention. D. A. 49 had long been the most influential district in the Knights of Labor. De Leon and his immediate following had taken over Mixed Local Assembly 1563, the Excelsior Labor Club. Using L. A. 1563 as a base, De Leon sought to institute rigid party control over the District Assembly. He was the first party member delegate from L. A. 1563 to D. A. 49 --beginning in July, 1891.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>The People (New York), March 22, April 19, May 3, 1896.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895 and Rudolph Katz, "With De

Under De Leon's leadership the Socialist Laborites hoped to "bore from within" the Order of the Knights of Labor. Party members probably never had a clear majority in D. A. 49, but there were always enough to control decisions, and the District delegates operated under a unit rule at the General Assembly, so that their power was magnified.<sup>85</sup> Although the District Assembly had virtually run the Order in the 1880's, it had not been militantly Socialist Laborite; De Leon's chance to duplicate the importance of the old D. A. 49 in the nineties came in 1893.

In that year, the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, held in Philadelphia, reelected General Workman Powderly; it later reversed itself when charges of irregularity were brought against him by John W. Hayes. De Leon, a delegate from D. A. 49, led the socialists into a combination with the Westerners to elect James R. Sovereign.<sup>86</sup> The Socialist Labor press was jubilant over the results of the General Assembly. De Leon pointed out that Powderly

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Leon Since '89" in National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1934), II, 28.

<sup>85</sup>John R. Commons and others, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1926), II, 408.

<sup>86</sup>Norman J. Ware, op. cit., p. 369.

was a vestige of an era that is fast passing away--the era when the current of the Labor Movement brought "accidents" to the top. . . . /The late General Assembly has/ sounded the opening of a new era. . . . The Knights of Labor have set the example in plying the broom with firmness.<sup>87</sup>

Upon Sovereign's election and for the following two years, the Knights of Labor became the darling of De Leon's thoughts. As noted previously, it was natural that the Socialist Laborites should have been more attracted, in principle, to the Knights than to the Federation, because of the latter's endorsement of universality and industrial unionism. Yet it was these very principles which allowed the Knights to become "infiltrated" with all kinds of reformers, single taxers, and Populists--people whom De Leon hated and with whom he urged no contact or cooperation.<sup>88</sup> And the A. F. of L., while it insisted that it was composed of craft unions, certainly allowed and welcomed the Brewers', a foremost industrial union (and one which contained many party members), and included within its framework many "federal unions" which were counterparts of the mixed assemblies in the Knights of

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<sup>87</sup>The People (New York), December 10, 1893.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., October 24, 1897.

Labor. De Leon always depreciated the federal unions as "fishy and mythical links of the Federation,"<sup>89</sup> even though he himself was a member of a mixed local assembly. Considering the actual parallel nature of the two organizations, De Leon probably was not attracted to the Knights of Labor because of any of its principles. Rather, as the K. of L. was in decline, it was easier to "infiltrate." Furthermore, its constitution made for centralized control, so that gaining direction of the national office would give one considerable influence.

After his success in the General Assembly of 1893, De Leon took the position that the Knights of Labor could do no wrong. This was, of course, an absolute reversal of thought, and could not be comprehended overnight by all. Loyal party members, in fact, refused to send delegates to the Knights of Labor New York State Convention in January, 1894, because they didn't like the K. of L. lobbyists who were fooling around with capitalist politicians.<sup>90</sup> Soon, however, everyone in the party seemed to have endorsed the change in policy.<sup>91</sup> The change in De Leon's view was so

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., December 23, 1894.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., January 14, 1894.

<sup>91</sup>Perhaps it is just that The People allowed no indications that there was an anti-K. of L. faction left within

complete that when a circular was put out by Knights of Labor L. A. 54, Boston, which seemed conciliatory to the capitalists, De Leon immediately said that such a document couldn't be a Knights of Labor flier and branded it a "clumsy forgery, so clumsy that forgery appears on its very face."<sup>92</sup> So imbued was De Leon with the cause that when the work proved to be, in actuality, that of L. A. 54, he claimed that "investigation has confirmed our position in all essential particulars [although] technically, the circular did issue from a K. of L. organization."<sup>93</sup>

In De Leon's columns, during 1894, Sovereign continually worked for socialism, and the Knights, purified and in favor of new trades unionism, were at last beginning to grow. Sovereign added to this impression by giving a militantly socialistic address when he visited D. A. 49.<sup>94</sup> Articles in The People rewrote history to show that the Knights of Labor, when not under the leadership of such dupes as Powderly, was a truly socialist organization, and had been so from the start. In November, The People

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the party.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., March 25, 1894.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., April 22, 1894.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., September 30, 1894.



carried a life of Uriah Stephens which repeated the spurious legend about J. George Eccarius supplying him with Marxian literature.<sup>95</sup> Stephens, in The People's account of his life, became an out and out new trade unionist and socialist. When J. A. Rodier, the District Master Workman of D. A. 19, claimed that the rank and file Knights were not socialists, De Leon felt that "old Uriah Stephens must have turned over in his grave."<sup>96</sup> After all, according to De Leon, it was international socialist Stephens who had adopted the red flag as the symbol of K. of L. locals.<sup>97</sup>

Only one doubt publicly crossed De Leon's mind as to the worth of the Knights of Labor in 1894--once he wondered about New York's own member on the General Executive Board, T. B. McGuire.<sup>98</sup> McGuire had been an original member of the Home Club, and had also served as District Master Workman of D. A. 49. De Leon's doubt was only transitory, and he, along with Patrick Murphy, William

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., November 11, 1894, and John R. Commons, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1926), II, 197n.

<sup>96</sup>The People (New York), April, 1894.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., October 28, 1894.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., July 22, 1894.

Brower, and Michael Kelley, all Socialist Labor Party members, was easily elected to represent D. A. 49 at the 18th General Assembly in New Orleans.<sup>99</sup>

There were only eight party members at the assembly, but they succeeded, through combinations with others, in rejecting the credentials of Powderly as well as of Pat McBryde, of the Mine Workers National Trade Assembly No. 136.<sup>100</sup> The relations between Sovereign and De Leon were excellent, and the eight party members voted solidly for the reelection of the entire Sovereign administration.<sup>101</sup> De Leon was very pleased with the whole assembly, and felt that the New Orleans meeting had carried on the work begun at Philadelphia by the dismissal of Powderly. He wrote:

This year the work of purification was continued, and successfully brought to a conclusion. [The New Orleans Assembly] . . . ruthlessly lopped off elements that were a block and hindrance to progress. It had no use for "pure and simpleness." It planted itself unmistakably upon the high plane

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., September 30, 1894.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., November 18 and 25, 1894. McBryde had also been a member of the United Mine Workers delegation to the A. F. of L. Convention.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1894.

of new trade unionism.<sup>102</sup>

De Leon was fully satisfied and pledged the "Socialist Knights" to full support of the general officers.<sup>103</sup> Even while De Leon was rejoicing, the more conservative forces within D. A. 49 were preparing to challenge his leadership. On January 13, 1895, the long party control of the D. A. was nearly ended when the party's candidate for Master Workman was held to a tie vote. After a two week delay, however, the party's candidate, William L. Brower, of the Shoemakers', won handily in the run-off.<sup>104</sup> Shortly after control of D. A. 49 was again assured, De Leon reversed his established policy by becoming critical of Sovereign, castigating him in an open letter on the money question. Sovereign had opposed the passage of two currency bills in Congress, acting from a doctrinaire socialistic motive that it would make nationalization more difficult. De Leon could and did oppose all solutions to the money question, and urged that no consideration be given to any monetary problems. De Leon's idea was that money problems would

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<sup>102</sup>The People (New York), December 2, 1894.

<sup>103</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1895.

be non-existent after the socialist revolution.<sup>105</sup> That the D. A. 49--General Board honeymoon was over became apparent when Brower, in his inaugural address, spoke of the need for the establishment of new trades unionism and proposed a full time secretary to take charge of agitation.<sup>106</sup>

There was no explanation given for the sudden lack of agreement with the General Officers, other than the differences in principles discussed in each article. When De Leon picked up a Journal of the Knights of Labor article in which the socialist parties, along with all others, were classified as "short-lived and vacillating," he branded the article "unpardonable" in "the organ of the order founded by the Socialist Uriah S. Stephens."<sup>107</sup> This article appeared in April, and from that time on, relations between De Leon and Sovereign continued to be less than cordial. It must have been quite a blow to De Leon when T. B. McGuire, of the party and the Home Club of old, and a past District Master Workman, appeared to be

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1895.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1895.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., April 21, 1895.

hobnobbing with Powderly and the anti-socialist Knights.<sup>108</sup>

As the rift between De Leon and the general officers grew wider, it was reflected in the activities of the Central Labor Federation. The party remained in firm, and rather centralized, control. In the election of C. L. F. officers, for instance, only party members were installed, with a single trusted party member holding down several jobs in the C. L. F. Thus Ernest Bohm was recording secretary for the C. L. F. and was also on the organization and arbitration committees, as well as being the secretary of his local. In addition, he was also secretary of the Excelsior Labor Club of D. A. 49.<sup>109</sup> David S. Heimerdinger, in addition to holding office in his own local, was Master Workman of D. A. 49, and, at various times in the C. L. F., was sergeant-at-arms, trustee, and member of the credential, organization, and arbitration committees. In all, in the years 1894 and 1895, the C. L. F. used only 42 men to fill 100 offices!<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>See Powderly's letter to the editor, Ibid., September 29, 1895.

<sup>109</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., March 11 and September 9, 1894, and March 10, September 8, and October 27, 1895.

In spite of the predominance of party leaders and continued party control in the C. L. F., the division between De Leon and the K. of L. was reflected in factionalism within the Central Labor Federation.

The showdown between the K. of L. faction and the De Leonites came in a dispute among the brewery unions. In April, 1888, most of the brewery owners in the New York area had formed an anti-union "pool" in order to aid brewers who were having "union trouble."<sup>111</sup> The proper role of labor toward "pool" brewers and "pool" beer was of concern for some years. At first labor tried a general boycott, which had some success, judging from an attempt by the brewers to bribe some union members to remove the boycott. When the bribed members denied complicity, the New York labor movement split; the Central Labor Federation, largely party dominated, left the Central Labor Union.<sup>112</sup> Only the C. L. F. maintained the boycott.<sup>113</sup> When Gompers was influential in forming the New York Federation of Labor in 1891, the C. L. F., under party influence, ordered its

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<sup>111</sup>Hermann Schlüter, The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers Movement in America (Cincinnati: International Union of United Brewery Workmen of America, 1910), pp. 148-153.

<sup>112</sup>See above, p. 83.

<sup>113</sup>Hermann Schlüter, op. cit., p. 190.

affiliated unions, including Brewers' Union No. 1,<sup>114</sup> not to recognize the new body. The union, however, remained loyal to Gompers, and hence was expelled from the C. L. F. The C. L. F. then formed a dual union, the Journeymen Brewers' Union of New York.<sup>115</sup> In pique against the Gompersite International Union, the C. L. F. also gave up the boycott. The problem of "pool" beer was not finally settled till 1902, when the brewers entered into contracts with the International.<sup>116</sup> Meanwhile, the dual union fought the regular union bitterly, even recruiting locals from within the Gompersite organization. A confused situation resulted, in which some locals were affiliated with the C. L. F., the New York Federation of Labor, and the party's dual union, all at the same time! The Firemens' Union and the Progressive Coopers' Union both fall into this category. There were also some locals which had party leadership, but which stayed outside the C. L. F. Kurzenknabe, Bechtold, and Schlüter were leaders in locals of this type. The S. L. P., to show its disapproval of such a course, expelled

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<sup>114</sup>Brewers' Union No. 1 was also affiliated with the International Union of United Brewery Workmen of America.

<sup>115</sup>Hermann Schlüter, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. 197.

Kurzenknabe in 1892, though the other two remained in good party standing.<sup>117</sup>

In 1894 the International Brewery Workmen, then led by secretary Kurzenknabe, joined the Knights of Labor. As this was during the De Leon-K. of L. honeymoon, De Leon was gratified at the step, and seemed especially pleased that Kurzenknabe and Bechtold had been elected to the 1894 K. of L. General Assembly.<sup>118</sup> This is one of the few times that De Leon ever indicated approval of a non-party socialist, and the only time he ever praised an expelled member. De Leon could not go all the way and endorse Kurzenknabe's union, of course, for that would have been an affront to the Ale and Porter Union, the Ernest Bohm led and party controlled affiliate of the dual union. The Ale and Porter Union was very ambitious, and had industrial union ideas about the whole brewing industry.

Though the Firemens' Union was sincerely trying to get along with both the International and the C. L. F., the very fact that it was in the International caused some resentment among loyal De Leonite party members. Thus Edward Henckler, a recording secretary of the C. L. F., picked out

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<sup>117</sup>The People (New York), January 31, 1892.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., November 18, 1894.



the Firemens' Union for his scapegoat. When reporting absences for September 2, 1894, Henckler noted "Firemens' Union No. 1" and added "(as usual)."<sup>119</sup> On June 2, 1895 (after the De Leon-Knights of Labor split) when the Firemens' delegate was absent, Henckler noted that "they only appear when they have a grievance."<sup>120</sup> Yet at the time the Firemens' delegate had not been listed absent for two months.<sup>121</sup>

Increasingly, the Ale and Porter Union had difficulties with the Firemens' Union and the Progressive Coopers' Union, inasmuch as they continued their first loyalties to the International, in spite of membership in the C. L. F. Shortly after the Progressive Coopers joined the K. of L., (following the same action by its parent body), therefore, the Ale and Porter Union brought charges which resulted in the Progressive Coopers being expelled from the C. L. F.<sup>122</sup> Successful in its first attempt, the Ale and Porter organization then filed charges against the Firemens' Union.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>The People (New York), September 9, 1894.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., June 9, 1895.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., April 14 through June 2, 1895.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., May 26, 1895 and July 28, 1895.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., September 1, 1895.

But the latter union, already goaded by Henckler's actions, answered by preferring countercharges, in the Knights of Labor, against all Knights of Labor locals in the C. L. F., on the grounds that the C. L. F. was not supporting the boycott on "pool" beer.<sup>124</sup> These charges were all inclusive, and hence were against De Leon's own local, L. A. 1563, the Excelsior Labor Club, which was an affiliate of both the C. L. F. and D. A. 49, Knights of Labor.<sup>125</sup>

Meanwhile, De Leon had given up all hope of influencing the general officers of the Knights of Labor, and had written a rather scathing editorial on the attitude of the Journal of the Knights of Labor toward the Brooklyn Trolley Strike.<sup>126</sup> The strike was not party-instigated, but the S. L. P. had hoped to gain members by capitalizing on the strikers' difficulties. The K. of L. recognized the strike as the hopeless thing it was. The week following De Leon's editorial, the Excelsior Labor Club protested the action of D. A. 49 in admitting the Progressive Coopers (after expulsion from the C. L. F.) to the Assembly.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>The People (New York), October 6, 1895.

<sup>125</sup>Even against the Firemen themselves, De Leon noted.

<sup>126</sup>The People (New York), June 30, 1895.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., July 7, 1895. The Progressive Coopers, when

That D. A. 49 granted the charter at all demonstrated that De Leonite control over the socialist District Assembly was not absolute, inasmuch as it was the De Leonite faction which had expelled the Progressive Coopers from the C. L. F. The manipulation of the D. A. was sufficiently strong, however, that the delegation selected by the District to go to the Washington (1895) General Assembly of the Knights of Labor was composed entirely of De Leonite party members.

The general officers of the Knights of Labor, after receiving the charges filed by the Firemens' Union, took the opportunity presented to try to eliminate the De Leonites from the order. The General Executive Board of the K. of L. therefore ordered the officers of L. A. 1563 (Excelsior Labor Club) to appear in Washington to answer the charges preferred by a local in good standing.<sup>128</sup> David

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expelled from the C. L. F., had joined the K. of L. When a local joined the K. of L., it was expected to affiliate with some district organization, although it was not mandatory. D. A. 49 would have been the mixed district assembly in the Progressive Coopers' area. The Coopers had three choices: (1) join the D. A. 49; (2) affiliate with the International, which was a National Trade Assembly in the K. of L.; (3) remain autonomous, under the direct supervision of the national office. The choice selected, number one, indicated that the Progressive Coopers were under socialist, if not De Leonite, control.

<sup>128</sup>The People (New York), October 6, 1895. The De

Heimerdinger, Master Workman of L. A. 1563 and Sergeant-At-Arms for the C. L. F., and Ernest Bohm, Corresponding Secretary for both the local and the C. L. F., answered the charges. They appointed De Leon as their counsel, and the three went to Washington to face the Executive Board.<sup>129</sup>

De Leon presented some fine arguments to the Board, but it is probable that the decision would have been the same regardless of the arguments of L. A. 1563. The Executive Board ordered L. A. 1563 reorganized. Such a reorganization at that time would have denied the L. A. its representation in the General Assembly. The Excelsior Club, of course, could send delegates anyway, and its credentials would then be passed upon by the final authority in the Knights of Labor, the General Assembly. L. A. 1563 followed this course. On the floor of the Assembly De Leon was charged with sabotaging the order by advising Arthur Keep, a Washington, D. C. party member, not to join the K. of L. De Leon vigorously denied this, and presented a

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Leonite Socialist Labor Party members within the Firemens' Union later insisted that the charges against L. A. 1563 were not valid, having been filed by the union secretary on his own personal initiative.

<sup>129</sup>The People (New York), September 29, 1895.

logical case exonerating himself.<sup>130</sup> Even though De Leon pointed out the error in the specific charge, it is certainly true that the C. L. F., in the last half of 1895, did discourage unions from affiliating with the Knights, and that De Leon's editorials were in line with C. L. F. policy. In the case of the Progressive Coopers' Union, an actual protest had been made, and the request to D. A. 49 not to issue the charter.<sup>131</sup> The Assembly denied De Leon a seat, but the vote was so close that the Socialist Laborites called "fraud."<sup>132</sup> After the Assembly had refused to seat De Leon, the factors which had caused his quarrel with the officers of the Knights began to come to light.

De Leon's anger with the Knights of Labor had little to do with new trade unionism or with socialistic principles--it was over the failure of the party to gain control of the Knights. In a series of documents which

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<sup>130</sup>The People (New York), December 1, 1895.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., June 30, 1895. Inasmuch as there had been no protest when the Coopers joined the K. of L., it would seem strange that there should be objection when the Coopers augmented its action by asking affiliation with D. A. 49. The issue only becomes clear when two factors are considered: (1) the failure of Sanial to get the editor's chair in April, between the two applications; (2) the tenuous majority held in D. A. 49 by the De Leonites, as evidenced by the closeness in the January elections. See above, p. 114.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895.

De Leon published in The People, the matter became clear. In return for De Leon's support in the 1894 Convention, Sovereign had agreed to make Lucien Sanial editor of the Journal of the Knights of Labor.<sup>133</sup> Sovereign's opinion of Sanial was good; the Grand Master Workman considered that Sanial had "not an equal as a writer in New York City."<sup>134</sup> Sovereign was unable to deliver on his promise, although there was no reason to think that he was not sincere in trying to honor his pledge. Just as it was Hayes who preferred charges which ousted Powderly, it was probably Hayes who prevented socialistic editorship of the Journal. Sovereign still had hope of placing Sanial as late as March, 1895,<sup>135</sup> but Hayes, in control of the Journal, had made no provision for him. Sovereign's last letter to De Leon on the subject referred to a target date of April 15, 1895, as the deadline for placing Sanial on

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<sup>133</sup>It is interesting to note that in the party's attempt to infiltrate the two major unions, the focus of attention in both was Lucien Sanial. Notwithstanding his vital role, however, Sanial left the party in 1902, "rotten ripe for a fall," according to the De Leonite National Secretary. See Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon," in De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1934), I, 48.

<sup>134</sup>The People (New York), December 29, 1895.

<sup>135</sup>Letter of Sovereign dated March 4, 1895, loc. cit.

the Journal.<sup>136</sup>

The sequence of dates, considered with the timing of The People's attacks, clearly showed the source of De Leon's pique. On March 31st, when the Progressive Cooper's Union announced plans for joining the Knights of Labor, there was no adverse comment.<sup>137</sup> But the first issue of The People, after the target date of April 15th went by without the placing of Sanial, attacked Sovereign. Significantly the editorial castigated Sovereign in his position as editor of the Journal.<sup>138</sup> In justification of De Leon's actions, it should be recorded that the Journal at that time became more vociferous in its condemnation of socialism, also.

From the evidence presented it is clear that De Leon had in mind control of the Knights of Labor. That meant, to him, solid domination of D. A. 49 plus editorship of the Order's organ. Failure in this latter field spelled failure for the entire aim. De Leon came close; he lost the prime vote by a margin of only two votes, 21-23.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Letter of Sovereign, loc. cit.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., April 7, 1895.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., April 21, 1895.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895.

From the files of The People, the honeymoon of De Leon and the Knights of Labor appears to have been intense but short-lived. On November 19, 1893, just before the fall of Powderly, the New York Central Labor Federation refused cooperation with a union (Brewers' #69) if they joined the Knights of Labor.<sup>140</sup> From the election of Sovereign to its failure to put Sanial into the editorship, the party was very favorable to the Knights; after the latter event The People again condemned the leadership of the Order. Personal ambition, not socialist principles, is the only explanation for such a tortuous course of action.

The failure of De Leon at Washington, and the exposure of the tactics that had been used in trying to gain control of the Knights, opened the eyes of many party members as to the true nature of Socialist Labor Party leadership. The New York Abendblatt,<sup>141</sup> on November 14, 1895, ran an editorial by "Sparks" in which it declared that

De Leon's "victories," together with his "struggles" in both national labor organizations do not cause us much joy. Comrade De Leon is too excessive in his

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1893.

<sup>141</sup>A Jewish daily issued by the Arbeiterzeitung Publishing Association controlled by Jewish party members.



accusations and attacks . . . His  
tactics . . . are senseless. . . .  
Such warlike and intolerant tactics are in  
every respect unfortunate for our party,  
and have raised enemies to it even  
among friends of Socialism.<sup>142</sup>

Significantly, it was a Jewish comrade, Solomon S. Schwartz, who replied to "Sparks." Schwartz, the organizer of Section Brownsville and a watchdog for the party,<sup>143</sup> justified De Leon's position, and maintained that the Socialist Labor Party was pro-Knights of Labor only when there was more socialism in the Knights than in the Federation. Schwartz insisted that De Leon had, in 1895, attacked the Knights of Labor "fakirs" more than he had the A. F. of L. "misleaders."<sup>144</sup> Schwartz's claims on this score are very doubtful, inasmuch as serious criticism of the Knights didn't start till late April. On November 23, Abendblatt admitted that it had "annoyed us from the beginning that De Leon embraced the Knights with such a show of kindness."<sup>145</sup> It is unfortunate that the discussion revolved around the roles of the A. F. of L. and the K. of L,

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<sup>142</sup>The People (New York), December 1, 1895.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., November 12, 1893.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., December 1, 1895.

<sup>145</sup>Loc. cit.

as it would have been more enlightening to party members to have discussed "Sparks'" charges as to De Leon's tactics.

Much has been said about the De Leon's constancy and devotion to principle. Essays have been written to illustrate these traits. One of these, by a party member, bears the title De Leon the Uncompromising.<sup>146</sup> There is also one by a non-member entitled Daniel De Leon The Struggle Against Opportunism in the American Labor Movement.<sup>147</sup> But it is obvious that "Sparks" took a much more consistent view toward the Knights than did De Leon. The Abendblatt maintained that socialists should not meddle in any labor organization as they were all (in 1895) run by fakirs<sup>148</sup> who were inimical to socialism,<sup>149</sup> a position, oddly enough, that De Leon came to echo after his failure in boring from within.

It was De Leon who made the deal with Sovereign at the

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<sup>146</sup>By Arnold Petersen (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1939). 80 pp.

<sup>147</sup>By L. G. Raisky (New York: New York Labor News Company, 1932). 48 pp.

<sup>148</sup>The origin of the word "fakir" is generally attributed to De Leon.

<sup>149</sup>November 20, 1895, as quoted in The People (New York), December 1, 1895.

New Orleans General Assembly, in effect joining into a coalition with the capitalists; it was De Leon, who, in his life of Uriah Stephens, transformed the founder of the Knights into a militant socialist, in spite of the latter's clear statement:

You must not allow the socialists to get control of your assembly. They are simply disturbers. . . . I detest the name of socialism on account of the actions of the men who profess to believe in it. . . . If the socialists ever gain control of the . . . Knights of Labor they will kill off the work of years.<sup>150</sup>

De Leon's control over the party was not seriously shaken by the attacks of "Sparks," however, and, according to The People, the Arbeiter-Zeitung Publishing Association upheld Schwartz and censured the Abendblatt.<sup>151</sup> Nonetheless, the number of defections from the party began to increase after this affair, though there had to be in existence a rival socialist organization, the Debs Social Democracy, before the number of defections became large enough to threaten the life of the Socialist Labor Party.

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<sup>150</sup>Letter of Uriah Stephens, August 19, 1879, quoted in Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928 (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1928), p. 147.

<sup>151</sup>The People (New York), December 8, 1895.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SOCIALIST TRADE AND LABOR ALLIANCE

By the end of 1895, socialists in general and the De Leon Socialist Laborites in particular had been eliminated from the influence in the American labor movement. Though there were unions, such as the Cigarmakers or the United Brewery Workmen, which contained a large admixture of socialists, and even of party members, these unions operated on a 'pure and simple' basis in the economic field rather than in that of politics. With no avenue left for infiltration, there was nothing left for De Leon to do but form a separate socialistic union organization.

In actual fact, the United Central Labor Federations, composed of delegates from the Newark and New York C. L. F.'s, the Brooklyn Socialist Labor Federation, and the United Hebrew Trades, was already functioning as a socialist central union for the entire New York metropolitan area. De Leon's task was to enlarge this working body into a national organization. After his credentials had been rejected by the Knights of Labor General Assembly in November, 1895, he immediately took steps to change the New York central body into a national organization. In his report (to D. A. 49) of the Knights of Labor's Washington Assembly he repudiated the "bogus" General Assembly and General Officers of the K. of L.; recited the degrada-

tion of the A. F. of L., and urged labor "to reorganize on that higher plane that sooner or later the labor organizations are bound to take."<sup>1</sup>

Under De Leon's guidance and exhortation both D. A. 49 and the C. L. F. took prompt action. On December 1, D. A. 49 passed a resolution repudiating the General Assembly and "deposing" the officers, and called on all Knights to join in a new organization.<sup>2</sup> The C. L. F., in its meeting on the same day, discussed the role of new trade unionism in America. From the discussion, according to the minutes, it

appeared to be pretty certain that in the near future a gigantic movement would be set on foot in the United States, which would result in organizing a truly, progressive and solid centralized body, both against the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor.<sup>3</sup>

The beginnings of the "gigantic movement" turned out to be the mass meeting held at Cooper Union, New York City, on December 13, at which time De Leon proposed a resolution

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<sup>1</sup>The People (New York), December 1, 1895.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1895. Sovereign, McGuire, and French of the National Board of the K. of L., were all present at the meeting, but could do nothing to alter the decisions taken.

<sup>3</sup>Loc. cit. It is interesting to note the negative attitude present even in this preliminary discussion.

inaugurating the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. The resolution was overwhelmingly adopted.<sup>4</sup> J. Mahlon Barnes and John F. Tobin, both in New York as delegates to the A. F. of L. Convention, spoke at the mass meeting. Perlman, in his account of the proceedings, said that Barnes was unaware of De Leon's--De Leon was the final speaker of the evening--intention of having the meeting declare in favor of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and implied that Barnes would not have appeared had he been cognizant of De Leon's intentions.<sup>5</sup> This cannot be the case, however, as Barnes was present at the Central Labor Federation meeting on December 8, when the C. L. F. passed its resolution officially endorsing the new organization.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Barnes's speech to the C. L. F., immediately following the endorsement of the S. T. & L. A., congratulated the body on "its aggressive stand for progressive labor."<sup>7</sup> Barnes knew full well what he was

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<sup>4</sup>The People (New York), December 22, 1895.

<sup>5</sup>Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, History of Labor in the United States 1896-1932, Volume IV of John R. Commons, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 221-222.

<sup>6</sup>The People (New York), December 15, 1895.

<sup>7</sup>Loc. cit.

doing, and well deserved the opprobrium of Samuel Gompers so freely given.<sup>8</sup> The Cooper Union meeting had been filled to overflowing, and, in the next few days, many labor unions ratified a connection with the new Alliance. The five constituent groups (the four bodies of the United Central Labor Federations plus D. A. 49) lived in high hope the next few months, and the new General Executive Board published a "call" to all labor to organize, telling the workers:

Don't despair, fellow workers; the banner of victory has been raised; rally around it; Organize! Join the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance.<sup>9</sup>

But there were many unions who did not heed the call. Even within the C. L. F. and D. A. 49, in fact, there were large groups who disagreed with the policy of their central bodies. In D. A. 49, thirteen local assemblies had to be expelled the first week for refusing to cooperate with the new movement. These locals had a reported membership of 677 men.<sup>10</sup> Included among the expelled unions were

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<sup>8</sup>See above, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup>The People (New York), December 29, 1895.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., December 15, 1895. Figures are not available to the author as to the total membership of D. A. 49 in

Brewers (L. A. 684), the Beer Drivers (L. A. 685), and the Firemen's Union (L. A. 692). It was the Firemen's Union which had first brought the charges against the De Leonites; L. A. 684 had for some time been boycotting L. A. 1563, De Leon's local.<sup>11</sup> This left the Ale and Porter Union as the only brewery union in the new socialist organization.

In retaliation against the many brewery workers who remained loyal to the K. of L. (and to the A. F. of L.), D. A. 49 made a show, immediately after the creation of the S. T. & L. A., of raising the boycott on "pool" beer, a boycott asked most recently by L. A. 684 but which had never been enforced or even seriously considered. De Leon and D. A. 49 (now a district alliance rather than a district assembly) then began to attack the brewery workers unmercifully. Kurzenknabe became a "St. Louis deposit of alcohol,"<sup>12</sup> while the Brewers' Union became the "Old Political Hacks' Brotherhood," led by "Pimplenose Fakir Kurzenknabe and his jelly fish compeer, Winston-Bechtold."<sup>13</sup> No

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1895, though the 677 may have been close to 50%, in spite of the fact that the D. A. had claimed a membership of around 10,000 some years previously.

<sup>11</sup>The People (New York), September 29, 1895.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., May 31, 1896.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., September 6, 1896.



charges were brought against De Leon for such statements about fellow comrade Bechtold. The abuse, of course, did not long remain one-sided, as can be seen from the results of a court case, in which Bohm, of the Ale and Porter Union, successfully sued Kurzenknabe for libel.<sup>14</sup>

Bohm, already secretary of his party section, the Ale and Porter Union, and the C. L. F., also became the first secretary of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. The People seemed jubilant over the court's decision, and continued to abuse the Brewers.

Under De Leon's guidance (he was from the first a member of the new General Executive Board, and The People was from the first the official organ of the S. T. & L. A.) the new labor organization set out to organize dual unions in most organized areas. Although it always insisted that it stood for unity on the labor front, in most cases the S. T. & L. A. simply reasoned that the regular unions did not exist, as they were fraudulent. The only important exception was a short-lived recognition of party-member John F. Tobin's Boot and Shoe Workers (A. F. of L.).<sup>15</sup>

Even in this case however, the S. T. & L. A. included

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., December 20, 1896.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., May 2, 1897.

the General Council of Shoemakers, which became National Trade Alliance #7, and which soon disregarded the Tobin unions. In organizing dual unions, the S. T. & L. A. was following the lead of its predecessor, the United Central Labor Federations. Among the dual organizations that the latter had started were the Independent Bakers' Union (later Trade Alliance #8, S. T. & L. A.) and the International Marble Cutters' Union. Though in many cases the United Central Labor Federations' dual unions consisted of expelled or dissatisfied members of the older unions, it should not be assumed that there was always no justification for such dual unions. Certainly the dual International Marble Cutters (S. T. & L. A.) had some just grievances against the older Whitestone Association.<sup>16</sup>

The S. T. & L. A., in its natal enthusiasm, went much further into dualism than had its parent body, and caused much confusion in the labor movement around New York. Regular German editors noted this Wirren and criticized the new group. De Leon's reply was that he was proud of Wirren. Emphasizing the negative character of the S. T. & L. A., De Leon noted that one got blood when lancing a

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<sup>16</sup>The People (New York), May 22, 1898. But the S. T. & L. A., when it became practicable to recognize a rival, divorced itself from the socialistic International Marble Cutters', in order to gain a larger group.

boil, and dust when a house was cleaned.<sup>17</sup> The Central Labor Federation, which became District Assembly 1, S. T. & L. A., even went so far as to adopt as a motto "Hurrah for die New Yorker Wirren."<sup>18</sup> Of the constituent bodies of the S. T. & L. A., all were committed to the principle of dualism. Pregnantly important, the three largest--the C. L. F., (D. A. 1); United Hebrew Trades, (D. A. 2); D. A. 49 --all contained unions of the same trade. Thus L. A. 1028 of D. A. 49 (the Musical Protective Alliance) and the Carl Sahm Club of D. A.'s 1 and 2 both had orchestras available for hire at socialist functions. D. A. 3 (Brooklyn Socialist Labor Federation) included the Progressive Musical Union #1. Local Assembly 1028, the first to join the S. T. & L. A., had the brilliant idea of running a paragraph in The People to the effect that they were the only musical organization connected with the S. T. & L. A.<sup>19</sup> When the others protested such an article, an appeal was taken to the General Executive Board. The G. E. B. refused to discipline L. A. 1028, and ordered the three organizations to cooperate. The musical groups didn't heed the General

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<sup>17</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896.

<sup>18</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., February 13, 1898.

Board's injunction and the S. T. & L. A. remained for two years the scene of jurisdictional disputes between the three musical unions.

The situation in the musical unions was duplicated in other trades, and, as a result, the S. T. & L. A. developed a far from serene organization. The reports of the meetings of the General Executive Board are replete with accusations, counter-accusations, and expulsions. Inasmuch as D. A. 1 and D. A. 49 were by far the two largest bodies in the Alliance, much of the jurisdictional trouble came to focus between them, notwithstanding the fact that many unions, including L. A. 1563, were members of both bodies.

The formal organization of the S. T. & L. A. was much like that of the Knights of Labor, in that it provided for trade or mixed local or district assemblies. Yet it was not, as William E. Trautmann said, "a duodecimo edition of the K. of L."<sup>20</sup> In actuality, the Knights of Labor was an all-inclusive group pledged to the organization of all, including the farmer, while the S. T. & L. A. concentrated on the factory industries and mining. Like most Marxian organizations, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance

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<sup>20</sup>Voice of Labor, May, 1905, quoted in Paul F. Brissenden, The I. W. W. A Study of American Syndicalism, first issued, 1919 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957), p. 49.

neither understood nor appreciated the farmer's position.<sup>21</sup> The Knights of Labor, while they had a "centralized" constitution, actually allowed great local autonomy;<sup>22</sup> the S. T. & L. A. never granted autonomy to any affiliated group. The General Executive Board, for instance, wouldn't allow two of its strongest D. A.'s, 8 and 10, of Boston, to develop their own labels.<sup>23</sup> The striking similarity in the two groups was that, while advocating the principle of industrial unionism, and adhering to the 'one big union' idea, both nevertheless allowed trade alliances within their organizations. Three of the largest D. A.'s in the S. T. & L. A. were of such a type.<sup>24</sup> Trade Alliances, of course, allow one Trade a "special" category, and make it possible for "trade differences" to arise within an organization. There was much discussion within the S. T. & L. A. about

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<sup>21</sup>De Leon always classified the farmer as a capitalist, to be excluded from the rank and file of the proletariat. Technically, of course, he was right. But such a classification meant no influence for the party in rural areas.

<sup>22</sup>Norman Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895 (New York: Appleton, 1929), passim.

<sup>23</sup>The People (New York), March 13, and July 3, 1898.

<sup>24</sup>D. A. 6, The International Pianomakers' Union, D. A. 7, The General Council of Shoeworkers, and D. A. 8, The Bakers' and Confectioners' Alliance of America.

these trade alliances, and several times motions were put to restrict any further expansion into the trade alliance field.<sup>25</sup> The motions received but scant attention, as it was apparent to labor observers of the 1890's that the relative strength of the A. F. of L. was due to its greater emphasis on trade organizations.<sup>26</sup> Trade Alliances were allowed in order to gain members. In practice, the S. T. & L. A., like the K. of L., was apt to allow any type union, even to a mixed assembly which was limited to Bohemians.<sup>27</sup>

Hence the leaders of the Alliance were faced with a dilemma: Socialist union theory called for cooperation between unions to the extent that they would become one big union, emphasizing the solidarity of all workers against capital, but experience in the American labor field proved that restricted unionism was the more successful. In small matters, the Alliance could carry out socialist unionism: they could cancel a delegate's credentials because he had a capitalist newspaper (one of the

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<sup>25</sup>The People (New York), March-July, 1898, passim.

<sup>26</sup>The A. F. of L. was not growing much in the 1890's, but it was holding its own, while the K. of L. was declining.

<sup>27</sup>The People (New York), April 1, 1898.

German dailies) in his pocket.<sup>28</sup> In more important matters the Alliance found itself helpless: it could not force the S. T. & L. A. German Waiters' Union to accept a transfer card from the S. T. & L. A. Waiters' Alliance Liberty.<sup>29</sup>

The S. T. & L. A. was unable to instill socialist unity into its own organization. It could sometimes reduce rivalry between local unions of similar trade in the same district, as the national constitution allowed no more than one organization of a given trade in each D. A.<sup>30</sup> Hence the offending unions were amalgamated or expelled. Rivalry between D. A.'s, however, frequently got out of hand. The only effective punishment that could be used by the General Executive Board was expulsion, as the organization seldom was strong enough to enforce such disciplinary action as a strike or boycott. When D. A. 5, United Hebrew Trades of Philadelphia, which Barnes had been influential in organizing, began quarreling with D.

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<sup>28</sup>The People (New York), December 5, 1897.

<sup>29</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup>The People (New York), May 15, 1898. This provision was, of course, ineffective if there were more than one D. A. in a locality, a situation true in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

A. 12, a mixed assembly in Philadelphia, the G. E. B. expelled D. A. 5, even though the latter was the S. T. & L. A.'s first offspring.<sup>31</sup> While the G. E. B. could substitute expulsion for a more equitable solution among the children of the organization, it was much more difficult to deal with the parents. The national office was powerless to prevent an antagonism between D. A. 49 and D. A. 1 which grew unchecked for two and one-half years.

And while the unions of the S. T. & L. A. were bickering, the Socialist Labor Party members themselves were divided as to the worth of the new organization. Even De Leon's pro-S. T. & L. A. statements as to what the party's attitude was were by no means unchallenged. A majority of the Socialist Labor Party sections, of course, had no qualms about endorsing the S. T. & L. A. as a principle of new trades unionism; they had many qualms and were very slow when it came to actual cooperation with the new organization. Editorially, De Leon put The People to work in an attempt to show party members how the S. T. & L. A. would lead to the socialistic cooperative commonwealth utopia. But even with a continuous pro-Alliance barrage in their party organ, party members were very

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<sup>31</sup>The People (New York), July 25, 1897.



divided on the question of attitude toward the Alliance. An early 1896 referendum on the S. T. & L. A. in Section Greater New York showed only a 267-231 majority for approval of the Alliance.<sup>32</sup> This divided reaction among the rank and file who voted in the referendum was not shared by the party leaders, however, for De Leon, who epitomized the S. T. & L. A. to most New Yorkers, was the top vote getter at a Section New York meeting the next month.<sup>33</sup> Section meetings attended by only a very small fraction of the New York membership were the rule;<sup>34</sup> the conclusion to be gained is that De Leon and the S. T. & L. A. were popular with the hierarchy and the party faithful, but that much of this popularity disappeared at the lower level. The referendum vote apparently included the question of actual membership in the S. T. & L. A. by party sections, as many sections did join, as affiliated "unions" shortly thereafter. Section Kings County, second largest in the party, held a big celebration on May 22, 1896, to celebrate receiving their charter.<sup>35</sup> It was announced in

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<sup>32</sup>The People (New York), March 29, 1896.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., April 26, 1896.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1897.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., May 31, 1896.

the C. L. F. (D. A. 1) meeting two days later that all Socialist Labor Party sections affiliated with D. A.'s 2, 3, 4, and 5 had received their Alliance charters.<sup>36</sup> Significantly, D. A. 1, with jurisdiction in all Manhattan, Bronx, and part of Queens, was not included. D. A. 1 went on to report, however, that "all reports thus far show the English-speaking element was favorable to the S. T. & L. A."<sup>37</sup> Assuming the truth of this report, the close division on the referendum can only emphasize the foreign nature of the party.

The report, however, was overenthusiastic, for at a Central Committee meeting of Section New York on June 11, 1896, the 28th Assembly District branch protested the referendum on the grounds that the sections had not known they were voting for approval, membership, and representation, but thought the vote was merely on the acceptance of the principle of new Trade Unionism. The Assembly District branch insisted, therefore, that the 267-231 result was null and void, and asked a new referendum.<sup>38</sup> The Twelfth Assembly District branch simply announced that it

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<sup>36</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>37</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., June 21, 1896.

was going to hold another vote on the question of sending delegates to the S. L. & L. A.<sup>39</sup> Ordinarily, the party leaders would have made short work of such questioning of officially voted policy; this time, they apparently realized the extent of the opposition to the Alliance, and consented to a new referendum, on the question of sending a "fraternal" delegate to the first S. T. & L. A. Convention.<sup>40</sup> But even this watered-down referendum ran into considerable opposition. A partial count as of June 25 gave 58 to 79 against sending even a fraternal delegate!<sup>41</sup> The People announced that a meeting would be held June 27 in which the total vote would be certified, but the results were never published. It is to be assumed that the results were favorable to the sending of a fraternal delegate; the party elected such to attend.<sup>42</sup> But the referendum and voting action by no means settled the issue.

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<sup>39</sup>The People (New York), June 21, 1896.

<sup>40</sup>There was no official explanation of why fraternal delegates were necessary, inasmuch as locals, which could be S. L. P. sections, were entitled to representation, as were districts which contained sections as constituent locals.

<sup>41</sup>The People (New York), July 5, 1896.

<sup>42</sup>The idea of skullduggery, of course, presents itself here. The People, it should be said in fairness, rarely tried to falsify, in spite of an accusation once that the

It was again brought up at the party convention in July, 1896. At that time approval of the S. T. & L. A. was gained, 70-6, while the sending of a fraternal delegate was approved, 59-9.<sup>43</sup> Convention delegates, of course, were party leaders; even so the reduced participation on the vote concerning a delegate may be significant, showing that even the party leaders were inclined to limit cooperation with the S. T. & L. A. One of the reasons for objection to the S. T. & L. A. was the reluctance of the party members to pay dues, for in early 1897 Section New York had held a long conference in which it was deemed unfair to pay dues to both the party's economic arm (the Alliance) and the political arm (the party itself).<sup>44</sup>

While the Socialist Laborites didn't have full confidence in the Alliance, the reverse was also true. As an instance, a motion introduced into D. A. 1 on May 23, 1897, that all delegates to the District must be members of the Socialist Labor Party, failed of adoption, in spite of the S. T. & L. A. constitutional provision forbidding the

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paper falsified vote results, altering the totals for the various areas in the papers destined for those areas, in order to prevent detection. See Ibid., March 10, 1895.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., July 12, 1896.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., February 14, 1897.

support of any other party.<sup>45</sup> Although De Leon later cited this action as an evidence of toleration within the S. T. & L. A.,<sup>46</sup> it was clearly an indication of hostility toward the S. L. P. by the Alliance men. The party National Executive Committee, worried about this hostility, ordered a long article by Henry Kuhn, National Secretary, entitled "Attitude of the Socialist Labor Party toward the Trade Unions" to be placed in The People. In the article Kuhn pointed out that the S. L. P. thought that capitalism had developed to the point wherein pure and simple trade unionism, valuable as it had been in the past, was worse than useless. He pointed out that it was

plain, however, to every Socialist that this sinking away of the old style trade-unionism is only the prelude to a new organization of labor . . . the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance . . . which it is the duty of every Socialist in the United States to promote by all the legitimate means at his command.<sup>47</sup>

Later in the same year, in spite of this clearly and

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<sup>45</sup>The People (New York), June 7, 1897.

<sup>46</sup>Daniel De Leon, Socialism versus Anarchism (original title: The Beast Behind Czolgosz) (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1921), p. 24.

<sup>47</sup>The People (New York), July 11, 1897.

officially defined duty to support the Alliance, three Assembly District branches of the party requested withdrawal from the C. L. F. (D. A. L).<sup>48</sup> A few weeks later an Assembly District branch was discovered using tickets that contained no S. T. & L. A. label.<sup>49</sup> The relationship between the S. L. P. and the S. T. & L. A. continued to be debated, and, on January 9, 1898, a motion was entertained, in the General Committee of Section New York, which would have completely severed the section from the S. T. & L. A. The motion was defeated.<sup>50</sup> In spite of this pro-Alliance vote, which was communicated to all party branches as official policy, the Thirtieth Assembly District branch called a mass meeting to discuss the question on January 23, after taking stringent security provisions to assure that no interlopers gained access to the meeting.<sup>51</sup> The Thirtieth Assembly District branch was later purged because of their questioning attitude.<sup>52</sup> A similar revolt the same month in a joint meeting of the Thirty-fourth and

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<sup>48</sup>The People (New York), December 5, 1897.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., December 19, 1897.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1898.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1898.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., March 24, 1898.

Thirty-fifth Assembly District branches was quelled chiefly because the meeting was under the chairmanship of John J. Kinneally, a De Leonite party leader who was to become a member of the National Executive Committee. Yet even Kinneally did not rule the Alliance question out of order as settled, but rather allowed a vote, which, under his guidance, resulted in a 37 to 4 vote in favor of full party contact with the S. T. & L. A.<sup>53</sup>

The party lost many members during the discussions over the Alliance as more and more party members who were opposed to the Alliance left the party. The result was that the pro-S. T. & L. A. majority became greater as those opposed to the new union left the party. When the party leaders felt that their majority was strong enough, recalcitrant sections would be reorganized and purified. Specifically, the Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth, and Thirty-second Assembly District branches, all of which had expressed doubts about the S. T. & L. A. were taken in hand and 'purified' by the "loyal" members of Section New York.<sup>54</sup> The total loss of membership to the party over this issue in two and a half years, through desertions,

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<sup>53</sup>The People (New York), March 24, 1898.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., July 10, 1898.

reorganizations, and expulsions, is difficult to judge, but a non-party New York source judged it as high as 4,000 in New York alone.<sup>55</sup> This estimate is probably much too high; it is doubtful if the party had 4,000 members in New York City all told. But the number of defections was certainly large.

For the first two and one-half years of its existence, therefore, although all officers of the organization were party members, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was not, strictly speaking, a party-controlled body. It regularly endorsed the Socialist Labor Party ticket and candidates,<sup>56</sup> but it did not require party membership to join, and it concerned itself primarily with strikes and boycotts taking place in the 1890's, rather than with the socialist cooperative commonwealth of the future. Strikes and boycotts were the regular tools of the "pure and simple" unions; when the Alliance focused its interest on them it caused a dichotomy in principle which the party theorists were hard put to solve. Articles continued to run in The People emphasizing how these two weapons were outmoded; S. T. & L. A. unions kept participating in them and relying

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<sup>55</sup>The People (New York), September 11, 1898.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 1896-1899 passim.



on them as their chief, if not their only, weapons.<sup>57</sup> As such, the party did not get all the support it expected from the union; the truth is that they were interested in different things. The party's union was not the tail to the kite--the relationship between the party and its labor creation was unsatisfactory, but it was unsatisfactory to the party leaders, even though in many cases they were also the union leaders. This lack of harmony nettled De Leon for two and one-half years, and finally stirred him into action. A realignment with possible reorganization within the union was thought to be necessary. It has been noticed that steps were taken within the party to eliminate the anti-Union New York Assembly Districts. Similar steps also had to be taken within the S. T. & L. A. itself, to eliminate any anti-party factions. The actual crisis which brought on the Alliance 'purification' and 'reorganization' came when the long-smouldering antipathy between D. A. 1 and D. A. 49 was brought into the open. The event which

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<sup>57</sup>It caused some excitement on occasion, as some of the doctrinaire socialists were not nimble enough in mind to talk in one meeting about the uselessness of strikes and in another about the victories to be gained through striking. Thus J. H. Finn, the principle motivator in the expulsion of Herbert Casson of Lynn, refused to join his S. T. & L. A. union on a strike, because striking was opposed by socialist principles. See The People, April 8, 1898, for the attempt to explain the socialist position for Finn.

brought the trouble into the open occurred in the cigar-making industry.

The Cigarmakers' International Union (C. M. I. U.), under the leadership of Gompers, Strasser, and Perkins, had several locals in New York. The largest were #90, a German body, and #144, the "American" local which was (after its amalgamation with the old #15) Gompers' original union. Union 90 was a "progressive" union, even having the word in its official title, and its membership included a large number of Socialist Labor Party members,<sup>58</sup> and an even greater number of socialists. Union 90 was not, because of Gompers' insistence, a member of the C. L. F., but it did maintain cordial relations with the C. L. F. unions, frequently being granted privilege of the floor within the central body, and it ran a continual advertisement in The People about its meetings and attractions.<sup>59</sup> The C. L. F. membership did include one C. M. I. U. union, the Cigarpackers' 251. When the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was formed, many members of the C. M. I. U. and

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<sup>58</sup>Rudolph Katz, "With De Leon Since '89" in Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work A Symposium (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1934), II, 24, 25, 26.

<sup>59</sup>These advertisements appeared each week from 1891 through July 23, 1899.

Union 90 sent congratulations to the new body, and they fully expected to continue their cooperation with D. A. 1. The S. T. & L. A., however, early began to try to "capture" the cigarmakers' locals in the International, even though they were at the same time gaining the enmity of the same groups by attacking Strasser, Gompers, and Perkins. The attempt to "capture" the International Union had some success in Boston<sup>60</sup> and in Chicago party members got a group of cigarmakers to withdraw from the International and join the Alliance.<sup>61</sup> In New York, a campaign against the C. M. I. U. (really only an intensification of normal vilification) opened in February, 1897, with an article, "Lapses," accusing Strasser of actions verging upon the dishonest.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, a charge was brought in D. A. 1, accusing both Union 90 and 144 of scabbery.<sup>63</sup> The charge was proved false,<sup>64</sup> but the attacks on the C. M. I.

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<sup>60</sup>The People (New York), January 10, 1897.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., January 24, 1897.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., February 14, 1897. The gist of the charges against Strasser was that he tried to get individual cigarmakers memberships to "lapse" temporarily, so that the C. M. I. U. wouldn't have to pay benefits due upon retiring with fifteen years of unbroken service. The article was reprinted and widely circulated among cigarmakers.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., January 31, 1897.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., February 7, 1897.

U. continued unabated throughout 1897. Particular venom was reserved for David Heimerdinger, an organizer for the C. M. I. U., who had been a member of the inner "Triangle" within the party, as well as an officer of the C. L. F. from March, 1895 till his defection in the Fall of 1896.<sup>65</sup> The C. L. F. (D. A. 1), tried seriously, "to capture" the local C. M. I. U. till mid 1897; at that time it shifted to its regular "dualism" tactics and organized the All Tobacco Cigarettemakers' Union.

In December, 1897, the All Tobacco Cigarettemakers' Union struck the plant of Seidenberg, Stiefel and Company.<sup>66</sup> Through the help of the General Executive Board of the S. T. & L. A., and especially of William Brower and Bohm, secretaries of D. A. 49 and D. A. 1 respectively, the strike was settled favorably to the union.<sup>67</sup> The All Tobacco Cigarettemakers' Union, after the strike, changed its name to the Progressive Rolled Cigarette Makers' Union (P. R. C. M. U.)<sup>68</sup> and took action against workers who had scabbed during the

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<sup>65</sup>The People (New York), March 17 and September 15, 1895 and March 15, 1896.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1898.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., January 30, 1898.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1898.

Seidenberg strike by blackballing them for six months from all work.<sup>69</sup> The union then asked the General Executive Board of the S. T. & L. A. for approval of its union label, but the request was denied.<sup>70</sup> The General Board reflected the personnel of D. A. 49, and, shortly before the refusal to approve the label, L. A. 1563, De Leon's mixed local alliance, announced that they were going to organize a Cigarmakers' Union.<sup>71</sup> Two weeks later the General Executive Board of the S. T. & L. A. chartered the Pioneer Cigarmakers' Union, L. A. 141, affiliated with D. A. 49.<sup>72</sup> The dates of the events strongly support the charge that the personnel of the new D. A. 49 local was drawn at least in part from those scabs whom the P. R. C. M. U. was unable to discipline. The International Cigarmakers, at about the same time, requested the P. R. C. M. U., in D. A. 1, not to allow their members to make cigars.<sup>73</sup> D. A. 1 decided to cooperate with the C. M. I. U. and the Cigarette

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., February 7, 1898.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1898.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., February 13, 1898.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1898.

<sup>73</sup>Meeting of D. A. 1 on February 27. Ibid., March 6, 1898.

Makers expelled seventeen of their members who had gone in-  
to the Seidenberg plant as cigarmakers.<sup>74</sup> Reports were that  
these seventeen expelled workers were immediately organ-  
ized into D. A. 49's new Pioneer Cigarmakers.<sup>75</sup> D. A. 49  
later admitted that all seventeen had been given union  
cards, but insisted that the cards were to be regarded only  
as application blanks,<sup>76</sup> not as membership certificates.

A showdown in the city industry was effected on March  
14, 1898, when the C. M. I. U., through Union 90, struck  
the Seidenberg plant, where thirty-one members of the new  
Pioneer Alliance were engaged. The leader of the strike  
was Isaac Bennett, a man who had been on the National  
Executive Committee of the party since June 15, 1897, and  
who officially was still on the Committee at the time of  
the strike, though he had been "absent without excuse"  
continuously since the formation of L. A. 141, the  
Pioneers.<sup>77</sup> The members of L. A. 141, upon coming to work  
on March 14, violated the C. M. I. U.'s picket line. The

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<sup>74</sup>Meeting of March 7. The People (New York), March  
13, 1898.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., March 20, 1898.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., April 10, 1898.

<sup>77</sup>National Executive Committee reports, Ibid., June  
20, 1897 and February and March, 1898.

International claimed that the strike was purely economic in nature, but, although Bennett denied knowledge of there being Alliance men in the plant,<sup>78</sup> it is certain that the strike was jurisdictional. The strike settlement proved its nature, for the primary result was a union shop agreement for the C. M. I. U. and the consequent loss of jobs for the Alliance men.<sup>79</sup>

The action of the P. R. C. M. U. during the strike was amazing, and reflected the influence of D. A. 49 and certain party leaders over the actions of the S. T. & L. A. locals. Though not concerned directly in the calling of the strike, they stood to lose if the Seidenberg strike resulted in a union shop for the C. M. I. U. Therefore they supported L. A. 141, the very organization that they had accused of organizing their expelled members, and the P. R. C. M. U. even expelled one of their own members, Joseph Simon, because he attempted to present the facts to D. A. 49.<sup>80</sup> The Cigarette Makers' Union even went meekly

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<sup>78</sup>A man on the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, even if he didn't attend regularly, would certainly know where the S. T. & L. A. locals of his own trade were located.

<sup>79</sup>The People (New York), March 20 and 27, 1898.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1898. Simon had tried to speak to L. A. 141 on March 17, but had been thrown out as "a spy

along when D. A. 1 sided with the Seidenberg management in regard to a label issue, threatening to expel the Cigarettemakers if they didn't agree to the management viewpoint--a most amazing stand for a Marxian anti-bourgeois central trades union.<sup>81</sup> The results of the Seidenberg affair, or 'spectre' as it was called by The People, were significant for the party. Many members saw clearly for the first time that the S. T. & L. A., and especially D. A. 49 led by De Leon, was not devoted to labor organization, but to dualism; some thought they saw the leaders of the Socialist Labor Party emerge as men hungry for complete dominance in a portion of the labor union field, motivated primarily by personal ambition.

There was truth in both views. To De Leon, however, the "Seidenberg Spectre" only illustrated that the reins were not tight enough; that party discipline was not strict enough. This was especially evident when the National Executive Committee's treasurer,<sup>82</sup> oldest member

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of the International." The People (New York), March 27, 1898.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., April 3, 1898.

<sup>82</sup>Elected April 5, 1898.



(in point of service),<sup>83</sup> and most popular<sup>84</sup> member of the National Executive Committee, Henry Stahl, the financial secretary and brains behind the successful Arbeiter Kranken und Sturbe Kasse für die Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika<sup>85</sup> and a member of C. M. I. U. #90, sided with the International Union.<sup>86</sup> De Leon knew that, to the large number who had harbored reservations about the S. T. & L. A., Stahl's position concerning the Seidenberg affair would be the clincher which confirmed the doubts.

Before the time came for the Third Convention of the S. T. & L. A. (July, 1898) it was apparent that the majority of those Alliance members who were discontented with the dualism of the S. T. & L. A., were in D. A. 1, one of the two largest in the organization. Soon after the Seidenberg affair, the International Bohemian Marble Workers pulled out of the S. T. & L. A.<sup>87</sup> They were tired

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<sup>83</sup>Continuously since January, 1895.

<sup>84</sup>In the Spring, 1898, election, Stahl led all candidates in total votes from Greater New York, receiving 546 votes out of a possible high of 640. The People (New York), April 3, 1898.

<sup>85</sup>A fund founded in 1884 which had good solvency. It was made up primarily of German workers.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., September 25, 1898.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., May 22, 1898. Undoubtedly the Marble Workers realized sooner than most workers the true nature of the

of De Leon's leadership. Many influential party men were also questioning Alliance leadership. Thomas J. Morgan of Chicago, for instance, who had at first overlooked the attacks of De Leon on him, now became a leader of the protest against De Leon. In D. A. 1, anti-alliance leadership opinion was common. And D. A. 1 was successful in thwarting D. A. 49 on the date for the 1898 S. T. & L. A. Convention. D. A. 49 voted unanimously but futilely for a later (September) date.<sup>88</sup> D. A. 49 favored the later date as they were at the time using joint party-Alliance agitators to organize locals favorable to D. A. 49.<sup>89</sup> De Leon even admitted that a September date was preferable to July as the Alliances then being organized could at the later date be legally represented.<sup>90</sup> After D. A. 49 was outvoted as

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Alliance, as L. A. 141 (Pioneer Cigar Workers) was largely Bohemian, also.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., April 10 to June 12, 1898.

<sup>89</sup>In the field in 1898 were De Leon, party editor, and Thomas Hickey and Charles VanderPorten, members of the National Executive Committee.

<sup>90</sup>The People (New York), April 10, 1898. There was a three months probationary period before a newly chartered alliance could be represented in a convention. The agitators for D. A. 49 and the party had been quite effective in the three months prior to July, doing a great deal of at least temporarily successful work in New Bedford, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Gloversville, New York. De Leon's agitational work in New Bedford had resulted in five locals and one district assembly.

to the Convention date by the other affiliated unions, for some reason, (they claimed it was because of financial reasons after so much agitational expense), it did not send many delegates to the Convention. It was entitled to one delegate from each L. A., plus three general delegates from the D. A., but only three delegates were sent, all told. At the time twelve locals of D. A. 49 were apparently eligible to be represented.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, D. A. 1 sent a large delegation, numbering sixteen in all.<sup>92</sup> Inasmuch as there was a maximum of twenty-nine delegates to the Convention, D. A. 1 at all times had an absolute majority.

D. A. 1 thus controlled the Convention in which the stage was set for a showdown between D. A. 1 and D. A. 49. The antagonisms between the dual musical unions brought the trouble between the two D. A.'s into the open, when D. A. 1, urged into action by the Carl Sahm Club, challenged the credentials of Joseph Krinks, D. A. 49

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<sup>91</sup>The People (New York), July 17, 1898. Eligible were L. A. 11--Tailors, 43--Yonkers, 68--Clothing Cutters and Trimmers, 84--Bakers, 122--Shoe Lasters, 141--Pioneer Cigarmakers, 298--Shoemakers, 2394--Goodyear Turn and Welt Shoemakers, and 140--Bronx Borough Labor Club. In addition the Paterson Broad Silk Weavers perhaps were eligible.

<sup>92</sup>Loc. cit. There were twenty-two locals eligible in D. A. 1. For a list, see appendix II.

statistician and member of L. A. 1028.<sup>93</sup> It appeared on the first vote that Krinks was to be denied a vote in the Convention, but a series of objections and maneuvers by De Leon himself finally got Krinks admitted.<sup>94</sup> This victory, however, was virtually the only one that De Leon was to gain during the Convention. De Leon's loss of prestige was due in part, at least, to the quality of the opposition: Thomas J. Morgan, from D. A. 11, Chicago, and Ernest Bohm.<sup>95</sup> De Leon singled out Ernest Bohm, longtime secretary of D. A. 1, for his special attack, implying that Bohm could not carry on in the best interests of the S. T. & L. A. as secretary if he continued to occupy a similar seat in D. A. 1. De Leon was the only delegate to go on record as opposed to the re-election of Bohm, and Bohm, Waldinger (financial secretary), Miehlenhausen, and Korn

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<sup>93</sup>The People (New York), January 7, and July 17, 1898.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1898. The final vote was officially recorded as 16-14 for seating Krinks with vote, though there were only twenty-seven delegates qualified to vote at the time, and only twenty-nine in attendance, including Krinks himself. There apparently was no explanation given for the discrepancy in vote totals.

<sup>95</sup>Both had ample reason to be anti-De Leon. Morgan had been attacked viciously by De Leon in the party press, Bohm had been the leader and investigator for D. A. 1 during the Pioneer Alliance--Seidenberg difficulty, and had found himself in sympathy with Stahl and the C. M. I. U.

(Board members) from D. A. 1 were re-elected. The Convention also selected Hugo Vogt, W. F. Wilson and Samuel Hoffman of D. A. 49 to the Board.<sup>96</sup> The balance of power was held by L. Boudin and George Luck, both of D. A. 2 (United Hebrew Trades),<sup>97</sup> and both at that time somewhat favorable to De Leon. Nonetheless, immediately after the Convention, Vogt and Hoffman "resigned" from the Board, and called for a "special convention" of S. T. & L. A. members from the New York area to consider their resignations.<sup>98</sup> Vogt, in his position as party editor of the German organ, reported the reasons for his resignation to the party.<sup>99</sup> Inasmuch as De Leon edited the English organ, party members were made fully aware of D. A. 49's story. The Socialist Labor Party (Section New York) itself took action, instructing party members who were members of D. A. 1 to demand, at the District meeting, the resignations of Bohm, Waldinger, Korn, and Miehlenhausen. All four did

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<sup>96</sup>There seems to be no logical explanation of why these members of D. A. 49 should have been re-elected. Perhaps the call as party members overruled union sympathies in some delegates, or perhaps they were unaware of the D. A. 1--D. A. 49 struggle.

<sup>97</sup>The People (New York), July 17, 1898.

<sup>98</sup>Letter of "resignation", July 11, 1898, loc. cit.

<sup>99</sup>Loc. cit.

resign, ultimately going back to the relative quiet and normalcy of the Central Labor Union.<sup>100</sup>

The July 10, 1898, issue of The People devoted a large amount of space to the history of the anti-S. T. & L. A. faction of Section New York, preparatory to the purges referred to above.<sup>101</sup> In recounting the trouble the reporter noted that Section New York overwhelmingly favored the S. T. & L. A. but that an 'element' didn't accept it:

Section New York, voting for the third time on this question in the year 1896, cast only TWO negative votes. Did the irreconcilable minority element now think it proper to fall into line? On the contrary. That element now adopted the policy . . . to bother and weary the majority to the point of making it knuckle under to the minority.<sup>102</sup>

None of the Socialist Laborites on either side noted the humor in TWO men bothering and wearying over a thousand until they gave in! As a matter of fact, it turned out

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., July 31, 1898. The constitution of the S. T. & L. A. allowed for the demanding of resignations and provided for the calling of special conventions in the manner in which Vogt acted. Inasmuch as De Leon had a great deal to do with making the constitution, he may be called prophetic on that score.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., July 10, 1898.

<sup>102</sup>The People (New York), July 10, 1898.

that the "TWO" were a full 27% of the membership when the vote was taken to expel the anti-S. T. & L. A. Assembly District branches.<sup>103</sup>

The tactics of the party leadership in the S. T. & L. A. crisis were admirably suited to its purpose. It expelled anti-Alliance sections and branches, and filled its official organs with well-written anti-D. A. 1 propaganda. The party fraternal delegate to the Third Convention of the S. T. & L. A. pointed out the necessity for a thorough revamping of the Alliance, characterizing D. A. 1 as "in favor of inferior management and backward actions."<sup>104</sup> The purges of certain Assembly District branches resulted in a special convention that was dominated by party members favorable to De Leon. The De Leonite majority was also increased as S. T. & L. A. members loyal to Bohm would not come to a 'spurious' convention called by Vogt. The "convention" refused to accept resignations of Vogt and Hoffman, and filled the other "resigned" posts. It elected William L. Brower, secretary of D. A. 49, to the post of secretary to the S. T. & L. A. In this election De Leon did not again raise the question of whether a

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., July 31, 1898.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., July 24, 1898.

secretary of a D. A. could properly handle the job of General Secretary! Pat Murphy, D. A. 49 District Worthy Foreman, was elected to the financial secretaryship, and De Leon himself, then District Master Workman, was selected as a General Executive Board member.<sup>105</sup> Soon after this action, the largest New York locals connected with D. A. 1 were expelled from the S. T. & L. A.<sup>106</sup> Included among those expelled was the Ale and Porter Union. The Convention three months earlier had gone on record as supporting the Ale and Porter Union, even urging, in Resolution No. 8, that the whole New York brewing industry be organized under Ale and Porter jurisdiction.<sup>107</sup> It must have given some tortuous moments to doctrinaire men like De Leon to realize that when the new Executive Board recognized its duty to carry out the resolutions of the Convention, it technically meant aiding the organizational work of an expelled L. A.! The membership of D. A. 1 at the time of the July convention was 3,258.<sup>108</sup> Of this

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<sup>105</sup>The People (New York), August 7, 1898.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., September 11, 1898.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1898.

<sup>108</sup>Nahum I. Stone, Attitude of The Socialists to the Trade Unions, quoted by Paul Brissenden, The I. W. W. A Study of American Syndicalism (New York: Russell and



total, 1,725 were eliminated in the first purge of L. A.'s on September 1.<sup>109</sup> On September 15, the new Board expelled D. A. 1 itself, after providing that the Board could approve the transfer of "loyal" locals to other D. A.'s. According to the minutes, however, only two organizations, with a total membership of perhaps 150 men, joined D. A. 49 from the defunct D. A. 1.<sup>110</sup> After the expulsion of D. A. 1, the complete domination of the S. T. & L. A. by De Leon and a small group of Socialist Laborites became a reality. Only at that point did the S. T. & L. A. lose all chance of a successful life in America. Perlman, in his careful analysis of labor in the United States, indicates that the Alliance was stillborn.<sup>111</sup> In the long view, this is true. But for two and one-half

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Russell, 1957), p. 52. Although Brissenden says this total is for the whole S. T. & L.A., an analysis of the member unions shows that it is only D. A. 1. This total, compared with the party membership in New York City, makes it a certainty that there were non-party S. T. & L. A. members.

<sup>109</sup>The People (New York), September 11, 1898.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., September 25, 1898.

<sup>111</sup>Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, History of Labor in the United States 1896-1932 (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 221. A partial list of local alliances showing remarkable breadth in achievement is included in Appendix III.

years after birth the infant had some virility and constant growth, and many Alliance locals, especially as represented by Bohm and D. A. 1, were evidencing more and more concord with the American Labor movement. Cooperation such as was evidenced by the temporary D. A. 1--C. M. I. U. interlude, would have resulted in greater acceptance of the Alliance in America. In the Seidenberg incident there is much evidence that the members of D. A. 1 were becoming increasingly opposed to dualism.<sup>112</sup> It was only when De Leon took absolute control, in July, 1898, that the expected child proved to be stillborn. As a result of De Leon's work in the summer of 1898, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance became truly a party adjunct, unsuited, as was the party, for life or growth in America.

As an arm of the party (after the expulsion of D. A. 1 it would be difficult to call the Alliance a bona fide union) the S. T. & L. A. continued to exist for several years, until absorbed into the I. W. W. At that time, (1905) the Alliance claimed a total of only 1450 members.<sup>113</sup> This compares quite unfavorably with the 30,000

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<sup>112</sup>The People (New York), July 10, 1898.

<sup>113</sup>Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1905), p. 8.

claimed by secretary Bohm in his official report to the July, 1898 convention.<sup>114</sup>

Much has been written on De Leon's (and the Socialist Labor Party's) theories as to labor and labor's role in the socialist state.<sup>115</sup> A majority of these works discusses De Leon's attitude as shown through his editorials and writings, rather than trying to compare the written ideas of De Leon with the record of his actions, as recorded in the party press. Certainly De Leon's writings are vital for an appraisal of his thought; but certainly his actions must also be considered if one is to form a true impression of the significance and practicability of his work.

There were three basic pronouncements on the labor question by De Leon. All were speeches delivered when he was the recognized leader of the party. The first, What

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<sup>114</sup>The People (New York), July 3, 1898.

<sup>115</sup>Among the analyses might be listed Arnold Petersen's pamphlets Daniel De Leon Social Scientist (New York: New York Labor News, 1945), 80 pp.; Daniel De Leon Social Architect (New York: New York Labor News, 1941), 64 pp.; and Daniel De Leon Emancipator (New York: New York Labor News, 1946), 64 pp.; his two volume Daniel De Leon Social Architect (New York: New York Labor News, Vol. I, 1941, Vol. II, 1953), which contains the above pamphlets and other works; James Benjamin Stalvey Daniel De Leon: A Study of Marxian Orthodoxy in the United States, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, U. of Illinois, 1946.

Means This Strike? was delivered to strikers at New Bedford, Massachusetts, on February 11, 1898. The second, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, he gave before a predominantly party audience at Newark, New Jersey, on April 21, 1904, at a time when the S. T. & L. A. was at a very low ebb. His third speech, The Preamble of the I. W. W. was delivered before a Minneapolis audience in behalf of the newly organized Industrial Workers of the World. The three speeches were printed in The People; all three were reproduced in pamphlet form by the party, and all have been through many editions and widely circulated.<sup>116</sup>

In What Means This Strike? De Leon was answering a request to speak on the part of some striking party members. His primary purpose in delivering the speech was to organize local alliances in the S. T. & L. A. He told the strikers

I shall not consider my time well  
spent with you if I see no fruit of my

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<sup>116</sup>See (1) What Means This Strike? new enlarged edition, 1941 (New York: New York Labor News, 1954). Over 15,000 copies had been distributed by 1899. (2) The Burning Question of Trades Unionism. Many editions-"publishers have lost count" (New York: New York Labor News, 1952). (3) Socialist Reconstruction of Society special edition 1930 (New York: New York Labor News, 1947). The three pamphlets together with Reform or Revolution, delivered January 26, 1896, have been bound together in one book,

labors; if I leave not behind me in New Bedford Local Alliances of your trades organized in the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. That will be my best contribution toward your strike, as they will serve as centers of enlightenment to strengthen you in your conflict, to the extent that it may now be possible.<sup>117</sup>

The response to De Leon's organizational appeal was pleasing. Soon after the speech, two textile workers' locals, a spinners' union, and a mixed alliance were chartered in New Bedford.<sup>118</sup> The four unions were later brought together to form District Alliance #3, S. T. & L. A.<sup>119</sup>

The results are perhaps more flattering to De Leon's organizational ability than to his speaking ability, however, for he certainly didn't flatter the strikers. After telling them that their past strikes had all been failures, and implying that this strike was also doomed, De Leon promised them that he still had sympathy for the strikers

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Daniel De Leon, Socialist Landmarks Four Addresses (New York: New York Labor News, 1942).

<sup>117</sup>Daniel De Leon, What Means This Strike? sixth printing, new edition (New York; New York Labor News, 1954), p. 31.

<sup>118</sup>The People (New York), March 13 and 27, April 10, 1898.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., April 10, 1898.

in spite of

your [the strikers'] persistent errors in fundamental principles, in aims and methods, despite the illusions you are chasing after, despite the increasing poverty and culminating failures that press upon you.<sup>120</sup>

De Leon thus gave them sympathy, even though he admitted they had been dull in mind, because he appreciated the stamina shown by the workers, who still had the ability to strike in the face of their record of failures.<sup>121</sup>

De Leon's formula for the New Bedford strikers consisted of their understanding "a few elemental principles." These principles were, in reality, three basic tenets of Marxian labor economics: (1) Workers produce everything but capitalists steal part of the produce.<sup>122</sup> (2) There is an irrepressible conflict between the workers and the capitalists.<sup>123</sup> (3) Civilization has reached such an advanced state that production cannot be maintained by the individual, but only by the collective effort of many.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Daniel De Leon, What Means This Strike? p. 4-5.

<sup>121</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 9

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 23-4.

Recognition of these socioeconomic laws, said De Leon, was necessary to the realization of labor's real aim, bringing the government

under the control of their own class by joining and electing the American wing of the International Socialist party--the Socialist Labor Party of America, and thus establishing the Socialist Co-operative Republic.<sup>125</sup>

Admitting this ultimate aim, what could the new trade union do while awaiting the overthrow, at the ballot box, of capitalism? This question was, of course, the one always framed by critics of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance.<sup>126</sup> It is typical of De Leon's courageous attitude that he took up the question himself.<sup>127</sup> But his answer is far from satisfactory, from a trade union point of view. He castigates those unionists who think nothing can be done "but voting right on election day--casting

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>126</sup> For a good expression on the implications of the question by two members, Job Harriman and Morris Hillquit, who left the Socialist Labor Party in part because of the S. T. & L. A., see the Harriman--De Leon debate, Weekly People (New York), December 8, 1900, and the Hillquit--Berry debate, Ibid., December 7, 1901.

<sup>127</sup> Daniel De Leon, What Means This Strike? (New York: New York Labor News, 1954), pp. 24-25.

their vote straight for the S. L. P."<sup>128</sup> Yet De Leon points out no new weapon that a trade union, as distinguished from a political party, can utilize in bringing on the revolution. Somehow, the increasing Socialist Labor Party vote would give more protection to the worker if he were enrolled in an intelligently organized honestly led union.<sup>129</sup>

Intelligent organization, to De Leon, meant vertical industrial organization (called "shop organization" by De Leon) "that combines in its warfare the annually recurring class-conscious ballot."<sup>130</sup> To use De Leon's phrase, workers needed the "shield of the trade union . . . with the sword of the Socialist ballot."<sup>131</sup> But it is not at all clear what function the "shield" performs. The new trade union was to prevent scabbing,<sup>132</sup> both political and economic, but certainly the actions of the Alliance<sup>133</sup> belie

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<sup>128</sup>Daniel De Leon, What Means This Strike? (New York: New York Labor News, 1954), p. 25.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>130</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>132</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>133</sup>In scabbing see the case of the Seidenberg shop, above, p. 157 and the case of the Davis Cigar Shop, The People (New York), March 11, 1900 and Weekly People (New York), December 8, 1900.



any firmly held convictions on this score. Theoretically, the new trade union was not to rely on strikes<sup>134</sup> or boycotts,<sup>135</sup> but the minutes of the S. T. & L. A. meetings were almost entirely taken up with just these activities.<sup>136</sup> In sum, the main differences between De Leon's "socialist new trade union" and the "old pure and simple" kind was that the "new" were led by Socialist Laborites rather than "misleaders," and the "new trade unionist" knew he was waiting for the revolution.<sup>137</sup>

To avoid "misleaders" meant to deprive them of their unions; hence the S. T. & L. A. aim to "wreck" the old

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<sup>134</sup>See, for instance, the article "Ineffectual Weapons--The Strike" Weekly People (New York), September 29, 1900, in which it is pointed out that more "could be done in one election. . . than in a hundred strikes." . . . Strikes are a method that "a century of conflict has proved to be utterly worthless."

<sup>135</sup>The article "Pure and Simple Weapons," loc. cit., observed "The farce of boycott has been played again and again. . . .A trust cannot be boycotted. . . . The small business man can be affected by the boycott. The boycott was of importance when the small business man was of importance. When he became a relic of bygone days, the boycott was sapped of all its strength, rendered useless by new conditions, and should be relegated to the rear."

<sup>136</sup>The People (New York), 1896-1899. There are reports of S. T. & L. A. meetings in nearly every issue.

<sup>137</sup>Daniel De Leon, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism (New York: New York Labor News, 1952), p. 29.

trade unions. Outside of "wrecking," the socialist trade union, in theory, had no positive activities. In practice, in addition to "wrecking" the "pure and simple," the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance utilized the normal economic weapons of regular unions.

This dichotomy between theory and practice created a rational gap which was hard to bridge. William L. Brower, General Secretary of the S. T. & L. A., in his report to the Sixth Annual Convention of the Alliance, (Pittsburgh, December, 1901) asked the question

Is an Economic Organization Necessary?  
 . . . This is the old question of whether  
 or not an economic organization can win  
 anything. . . . It is possible for the  
 capitalist class to fight for months  
 and suffer but little. . . . The working  
 class . . . must win their fight early or  
 else suffering is inevitable. . . .  
 We do not doubt for a moment that  
 we must have an economic organization  
/but/ . . . we must avoid ill-advised  
 strikes. . . . /Yet/ a time comes in  
 every trade when it is necessary to strike.<sup>138</sup>

As Brower indicated, a union organization, in the last analysis, must be ready to strike. But insofar as the S. T. & L. A. admitted its readiness, it violated its own socialist theory. To remedy such a contradiction,

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<sup>138</sup>Weekly People (New York), December 7, 1901.

Socialist theorists designated strikes as of two kinds:  
 (1) pure and simple and (2) socialistic, and they put their stamp of approval only on the latter.

When a pure and simple union comes off victorious in a strike,<sup>139</sup> straightway its members drop off and it goes down to disruption. How different the aftermath with an organization planted on Socialist principles is seen in Slatersville. . . . The comrades after the strike was won<sup>140</sup>. . . at once arranged to establish a strong, lively Section of the S. L. P. in the village.<sup>141</sup>

From the events of 1895-1900, it seems apparent that to the loyal Socialist Laborite, the only significant difference between a "new" trade union and a "pure and simple" was the political action taken by individual members. It could be maintained that such political action could be taken without the worker being a member of a socialist

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<sup>139</sup>Although impossible in theory, The People admitted that this, on occasion, could happen.

<sup>140</sup>The reference was to a Slatersville, R. I. union victory. There were three strikes in the Slatersville, Rhode Island textile mills, in 1899. During the first strike the Alliance moved in. The first strike was won. The two that followed were lost.

<sup>141</sup>Thomas Curran, "The 'Tramps' of Slatersville," The People (New York), October 22, 1899.

trade union--or any trade union. This is the position maintained by the party members of C. M. I. U. local 90. The fact is that the party leaders could not allow such an opinion to be voiced, as they wanted control of the labor movement, and they therefore could allow the S. T. & L. A. to operate only as a group subservient to the party. The Convention controlled by D. A. 1 in 1898 caused the party leaders to re-evaluate the Alliance, and D. A. 1 was ejected because it failed to recognize the

principle upon which the Alliance was founded. . . : that the political movement must dominate the trade union movement, otherwise the trade union movement would dominate the party,<sup>142</sup>

To prevent the events of 1898 from recurring, the S. T. & L. A. took a series of stringent measures. At the fourth convention in 1899 it was decreed that locals belonging to trade alliances must also belong to mixed district alliances, a necessary arrangement from the party's standpoint as the party was directly represented in the mixed districts.<sup>143</sup> At the same convention union

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<sup>142</sup>Minutes of the Joint Meeting of District Assemblies, S. T. & L. A., The People (New York), August 14, 1898.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., September 24, 1899.

offices were changed to make them correspond with offices in the party.<sup>144</sup> In 1900 at the Fifth Convention the General Board recommended severe strictness in the matter of discipline.<sup>145</sup> In the 1902 convention the S. T. & L. A. took great precautions to preserve its political control.<sup>146</sup> It was enacted that officers of the Alliance must be "men over whom the Socialist Labor Party had jurisdiction."<sup>147</sup> They followed this with resolutions that no one could be a member of the General Executive Board unless he was also a party member, and that no expelled party member could join the Alliance.<sup>148</sup>

Absolute political control of the union was thus assured. But in assuring political control the Alliance

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<sup>144</sup>Loc. cit. The Office of "organizer" became the principal office in the Alliance, as it is in the party.

<sup>145</sup>Weekly People (New York), September 29, 1900.

<sup>146</sup>Added precautions to prevent non-party control were thought needed after the defection of William Brower, general secretary for three and one-half years.

<sup>147</sup>Weekly People (New York), Dec. 13, 1902. This was passed easily in spite of the fact that in a speech entitled "The Beast Behind Czolgosz" delivered Oct. 31, 1901, De Leon, caught in a seeming contradiction, implied that the Socialist Labor Party would never require an S. T. & L. A. officer to be a party member. See Daniel De Leon, Socialism vs Anarchism, new edition (New York: National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1921), p. 24.

<sup>148</sup>Daniel De Leon, Socialism vs Anarchism, loc. cit.

was deprived of an independent economic program. In the years from 1898 to 1904-5, De Leon developed more fully his conception of the role of the socialist industrial union, and the effect was to remedy the lack of program within the economic organization. The role of the socialist industrial union was to manage, direct, and control production and distribution through a syndicalist system,<sup>149</sup> to become effective after the revolution. But the union organization had to precede the revolution because

it would be a signal for catastrophe if the political triumph did not find the working class of the land industrially organized, that is, in full possession of the plants of production and distribution, capable, accordingly, to assume the integral conduct of the productive powers of the land.<sup>150</sup>

It was this thought of De Leon which gained the admiration of Lenin. Lenin was impressed that De Leon had

anticipated such an essential element of the Soviet system as the abolition of parliament /based/ on geographical representation and its replacement by

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<sup>149</sup>Daniel De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society (New York: New York Labor News, 1947), pp. 44-45.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

representatives for production units.<sup>151</sup>

In anticipating such a syndicalist<sup>152</sup> action, De Leon was perhaps prophetic, yet there were many factors which guided him to such a conclusion. De Leon was in frequent contact with the so-called "guild socialists" and "syndicalists" of England. The People followed the Hyndman Social Democratic Federation closely. The syndicalist solution had been anticipated by various sections of the party.<sup>153</sup> And De Leon, before becoming a party member, had been a member of the "Nationalist" movement, which had many overtones of De Leonite syndicalism.<sup>154</sup>

Regardless of the clarity as to the role of labor unions, as later developed by De Leon, the S. T. & L. A., during its period of growth and virility, operated as did

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<sup>151</sup>L. G. Raisky, Daniel De Leon The Struggle Against Opportunism in the American Labor Movement (New York: New York Labor News, 1932), p. 30.

<sup>152</sup>As used here, the term does not refer to those campaigning for the general strike or violence, but merely the establishment of control over production by the action of workers.

<sup>153</sup>See the resolutions of the Ohio State Convention, The People (New York), June 11, 1899.

<sup>154</sup>Nicholas P. Gilman, "'Nationalism' in the United States," Quarterly Journal of Economics (Boston), 3rd s., IV (October, 1899), pp. 50-76.

any union. The insistence, on the part of some Socialist Labor Party leaders that the S. T. & L. A. become a political organization, caused the ruin of the union, and, as will be shown in Chapter Six, contributed to the decline of the party.



## CHAPTER VI

### DOCTRINE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF THE NINETIES

Though the Socialist Labor Party of the nineties, and especially De Leon, often relegated doctrine to a secondary role in relation to power, nonetheless a discussion of party theory is in order. For even while contesting for leadership within the party, the various forces tried, and usually succeeded, to convince themselves that they were acting in accordance with only the purest and most scientifically thought out Marxist motives.

In view of the nature of modern Marxism, several items of doctrine naturally suggest themselves for study: the party's attitude toward (1) revolution, (2) religion, (3) anarchism, (4) United States' patriotism, (5) internationalism, (6) the class struggle, (7) scientific accomplishment and the industrial revolution, (8) bourgeois political techniques, and (9) non-party Marxian socialists.

As has been noted, De Leon's chief pronouncement upon the subject of revolution was his Reform or Revolution, delivered in 1896. Arnold Petersen, in his foreward to the 1947 edition, stated the official doctrinaire position of the party (both in 1896 and now) thus: the party could never support reform, for reforms "imply belief in the usefulness, or indispensability, of the thing to be

reformed."<sup>1</sup> It was admitted, both by De Leon and by Petersen, that, at one time, the capitalist system could have been reformed somewhat, with profit, but by 1896 the time for reform had passed; the whole economic system had to be thrown away, as further repair of the capitalist economy would most certainly lead to the "opposite result of that at which the process of repairing was aimed."<sup>2</sup> In the nineteen forties, Petersen admitted of the question, "How does one know when reform is useless and hence "revolution" necessary?" His answer was that De Leon "knew" by means of scientific demonstration.<sup>3</sup> De Leon, however, in the nineties, said naught as to the actual date of the necessity of the revolution, though he did imply that a point of revolution came into existence at a given time, the exact moment to be determined not by the workers, but by events.<sup>4</sup> De Leon admitted the difficulty of telling reform activities from revolutionary ones, and seemed to feel it necessary to instruct the faithful in discrimination between the two. Yet in spite of the fact that the

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel De Leon, Reform or Revolution (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1947), p. VI.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. VIII.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 15, and The People (New York), Feb. 23, 1896.

party regarded the moment of revolutionary action as scientifically determined, his instructions lacked any scientific objectivity and were merely exercises in semantical differentiation. A reformer, said De Leon, can be recognized because a reformer "must organize an opposition organization."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, a reformer "spurns organization,"<sup>6</sup> and "makes a distinction between the Organization and the Principle," failing to realize they are synonymous.<sup>7</sup> The reformer, in addition, would put "himself above the organization,"<sup>8</sup> would always be crying 'Bossism',<sup>9</sup> and would ever be inconsistent, and hence immoral, while "flying off at a tangent."<sup>10</sup> The reformer was also anyone who objected to the arraying of "class against class."<sup>11</sup> The revolutionist, of course, embodied opposite

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<sup>5</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896, and De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896, and De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896, and De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup>The People (New York), August 2, 1896.

traits, including continual submission "to the will of the majority."<sup>12</sup> Of course De Leon was referring to the majority inside the revolutionary organization, not the proletariat as a whole. De Leon insisted that the revolutionist knew that principle was superior to the individual, and hence De Leon found himself in the logical dilemma of how to follow the majority in a revolutionary organization when majority thought was not in accordance with the Principle. He solved his dilemma semantically and neatly: "The Principle and the Organization are one."<sup>13</sup> Thus De Leon said that he who worked within the Socialist Labor Party was a revolutionary; those who worked outside the party were reformers.

Nonetheless, reformers kept trying to gain entrance into the party. By definition, of course, they were bound to be denied admission, and anyway, as De Leon confidently noted, "a reformer cannot come within smelling distance of us [New York party members] but we can tell

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<sup>12</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896 and De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>Loc. cit.

him."<sup>14</sup>

In spite of De Leon's vigilance and acute olfactory senses, there were many members of the party who had to be eliminated because they maintained, according to the party leaders, the attitudes of "reformers." The dedication of De Leon and the party leaders against "unity" movements, of any type, as tending to reform, not revolution, was extreme. Hence they allowed no cooperation with any party, regardless of its Marxist qualities. In 1895 the party leadership forbade the S. L. P. members in Cleveland, Ohio to allow fusion candidates to run with party support even though the platform was that of the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>15</sup> The National Executive Committee suspended all members prominent in the coalition, even though the members' position were upheld by the highest judicial authority in the party, the Board of Grievances.<sup>16</sup>

The national office was so opposed to any cooperation, even under a Socialist Labor-Marxist banner, that it opposed a "unity conference" held in New Jersey to try to

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<sup>14</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896, and De Leon Reform or Revolution, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup>The People (New York), May 12, 1895.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., April 19, 1895.

unite the two factions of the party itself--the "Brooklyn" (De Leonite) and "Cincinnati" (Rosenberg) groups.<sup>17</sup> In practice, then, the meaning of the term "revolutionary" was very narrow: it was semantically limited only to those who were members of the Socialist Labor Party, and, within that group, to those who had the confidence of the national officers. And, it might be added, to those who maintained such confidence. Persons who met all the qualifications were rare indeed. Such a party workhorse and "revolutionary" as J. Mahlon Barnes, for instance, could fall from national favor and be branded a reformer or labelled as a "cold-blooded, crafty villain, a man without scruples of any sort . . . impartiality on his face and treason in his heart."<sup>18</sup>

There were to be, because of the narrowness of definition, few genuine revolutionaries at the time of the inevitable revolution, as only S. L. P. members in good standing, approved by the national offices, could fit the bill. As a result of its small size, the party therefore had to cast itself into the familiar role as "van of the proletariat." Casting itself in such a role, of course,

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<sup>17</sup>The People (New York), February 14, 1892.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., June 17, 1900.

was tantamount to an admission that the party could not grow; that the Marxist revolt could not be accomplished by means of majority action. The party believed that in

all revolutionary movements, . . . the thing depends upon . . . that minority that is so intense in its convictions, so soundly based on its principles, so determined in its actions, that it carries the masses with it, storms the breastworks and captures the fort. Such a head of the column must be one Socialist organization to the whole column of the American proletariat.<sup>19</sup>

This van of the proletariat theory, so common in all Marxist circles, thus had been also a central theme of the Socialist Labor Party. Inasmuch as it was only the "van" who were to realize the true significance of the coming revolution, of course, it again limited "revolutionaries" to party members. As an inevitable minority, party members would undoubtedly have lost faith rapidly were it not for the belief, which they held to be "scientific," of the inevitability of revolution and hence of ultimate justification. Such a set of beliefs about the revolution and the party's role, of course, gave the party a smugness born of knowledge that they alone are "right." As De Leon

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<sup>19</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896, and De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 22 and 23.

put it:

Our arguments are . . . irrefutable.  
And the character of our spokesmen  
is . . . irreproachable.<sup>20</sup>

The party gave to itself, semantically, two attitudes: (1) the only revolutionaries are members of the Socialist Labor Party; (2) a true revolution is inevitable. Such a semantically tight position led to a fanaticism for the cause which was beyond the comprehension of the average layman, and was even disconcerting to many orthodox Marxists. The calumny heaped upon reformers by De Leon in his 1896 speech has set the tone for the party's pronouncements ever since. The party, through its press, has heaped abuse upon those who, for any reason, have not been steadfast in the faith. Many men who devoted years to party effort were written off derisively as fools or knaves when it appeared they no longer were devoted Socialist Labor Party "revolutionaries." The General Executive Board of the party, for instance, reported the following about party member Feigenbaum, one of the pioneers of the Jewish

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<sup>20</sup>The People (New York), August 29, 1897.



socialist movement in America,<sup>21</sup>

. . . Feigenbaum, a semi-lunatic, a freak with more kinks in his head than the average man could ever begin to think of and more mental dishonesty in his make-up than could be traced with a thousand x-rays. This man Feigenbaum, who, during the taxation debate, was very aptly and fitly likened . . . to a monkey in convulsions.<sup>22</sup>

As a matter of record, Feigenbaum, connected with the Volkszeitung group in the great split (Kangaroo exodus) of 1899, had been a good party worker. He had been very active in party work at least since 1895, when he had had service as a street speaker for the party.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1890's, as today, the Party prided itself on its scientific outlook, and cherished the thought that it did not allow emotionalism to interfere in its logic. But the party press rarely was strictly scientific when berating a reformer. And De Leon was as great an offender against the semantically pure scientific approach as any. In 1911, De Leon wrote a series of editorials entitled,

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<sup>21</sup>Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States 1828-1928 (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1928), p. 168-169.

<sup>22</sup>The People (New York), June 10, 1900.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., May 5 and September 15, 1895.

"Berger's Hits and Misses" in which he branded Victor Berger a "reformist."<sup>24</sup> By definition, of course, Berger couldn't have been a "revolutionist" as he was not a member of the party. In the series, De Leon recorded Berger's "misses"--issues on which he failed to take a revolutionary stand. In so doing, De Leon was belying his position, and the uniqueness of the Socialist Labor Party, by the implicit assumption that a member of the bourgeois Socialist Party should act in a revolutionary manner. Even so, De Leon was hard put to find fault with Berger's actions, for of the thirty "misses" recorded, only four are sins of commission, while twenty-five are errors of omission.<sup>25</sup>

Such a dichotomy of thought has constantly been evidenced by the party: on the one hand reformers are evil; on the other "socialist" (the use of the term itself is challenged by the party) reformers are expected, somehow, to take a revolutionary position.<sup>26</sup> The failure of the Socialist Party to do so, according to the S. L. P., meant

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<sup>24</sup>Daniel De Leon, Revolutionary Socialism in the U. S. Congress Parliamentary Idiocy vs. Marxian Socialism (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1931), preface (n. p.).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., passim.

<sup>26</sup>Loc. cit.

the demise of the former. Yet in the nineties the Socialist Labor Party maintained "immediate demands" as well as calling for ultimate revolution, apparently in an effort to outbid "bourgeois reformer groups."<sup>27</sup> For instance, in the Platform of 1899, the S. L. P. favored such "bourgeois" reforms as initiative and referendum. Only when it became apparent that it could not outbid the Social Democracy (Socialist Party) did the Socialist Labor Party drop its immediate demands. Even then the party, through resolutions, continued to support certain reforms. Writing in 1911, De Leon could still credit an attempt at constitutional reform, on the part of Berger, as a "hit," not a miss, for "revolutionary" socialism.<sup>28</sup> The insistence of the contemporary Socialist Labor Party on revolution, not reform, would seem to be an insistence born of frustration and Marxian opposition.

The party of the nineties, regardless of theoretical stand, was ever ready to adopt reform. In 1893 someone on the staff of The People<sup>29</sup> objected to Dr. C. W. Woolbridge's

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<sup>27</sup>The People (New York), October 1, 1898.

<sup>28</sup>De Leon, Revolutionary Socialism in the U. S. Congress, p. 7-8.

<sup>29</sup>It was apparently not De Leon, as the editorial commenter claimed birth in the United States.

"A Parable of a Demented Socialist" by noting that Woolbridge's article favored reform rather than revolution.<sup>30</sup> Yet editorial comment on Woolbridge's subsequent rejoinder pointed out that the Socialist Laborites were happy to accept reform, and that socialization of the railroads, even within a capitalist society, would be welcomed!<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the clarity with which it was apparent that, in the nineties, at least, the party actually had no objection to reforms, most of the members eliminated from the party during the decade were eliminated on the grounds that they were "reformers." Included among those eliminated on such grounds were William E. Krumroy, candidate for various offices in Ohio, including that of lieutenant-governor,<sup>32</sup> Karl Ibsen, editor of the Cleveland, Ohio, Volksfreund, a party weekly and major policy maker for the party in Ohio,<sup>33</sup> H. Gaylord Wilshire, an outstanding speaker and publicist,<sup>34</sup> Herman Simpson, one of the Jews

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<sup>30</sup>The People (New York), July 30, 1893.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1893.

<sup>32</sup>The People (New York), March 4, 1894, and April 19, and May 12, 1895.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., July 14, 1895, December 12, 1897, and October 15, 1899.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., July 12, 1891, May 26, 1895, and other issues.

early in the movement, who, after expulsion, became the editor of the Jewish daily Abendblatt in New York,<sup>35</sup> Robert Bandlow, onetime secretary of the Socialist Labor National Board of Appeals,<sup>36</sup> Ida Van Etten, feminist and large donor to the party,<sup>37</sup> and Lucien Sanial, who wrote the party platform in 1899, was first editor of The People, and indefatigable speaker and propagandist for the party.<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of the decade Sanial was overwhelmingly the most popular man in the party<sup>39</sup> and delivered at least an address a week under party auspices. The records of all these expellees have some common elements. They show all were devoted servants of the party until their defection and/or expulsion; all continued to be lifelong Marxists, most of them in the Socialist Party: all were expelled on the same grounds, disagreement with the National Office,

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<sup>35</sup>The People (New York), December 1, 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., January 2, 1898 and October 15, 1899.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., December 13, 1891. See also A. F. of L. Proceedings, 1890, p. 38. For some reason The People showed remorse at her passing. The paper usually continued to berate "reformers" after death, but, perhaps out of respect for her sex, the policy was altered in this instance.

<sup>38</sup>Almost every issue of The People contained references to Sanial.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., July 26, 1891.

a disagreement which 'proved' their reform tendencies.

The constant emphasis, in party theory, on revolution, not reform, has had some serious by-products within the party. People who remained within the party for any length of time knew they had to wait for the revolution; they were not to support reforms. Inasmuch as the revolution was inevitable, and there were no reforms to support, there was very little a party member could actually do. In such a situation, it is little wonder that the party had difficulty preventing large defections. The solutions adopted to meet the challenge were (1) to put on an emotionally-charged show within the party ranks and (2) to give martyr complexes to those within the party to bind them together.

In both methods the party did have and has now some success. The National Executive Committee, for instance, after noting a decline in finances and enthusiasm, recommended festivals to the membership.<sup>40</sup> The 'festivals' were in reality big parties, allowing for participation of the entire group. Even today, the party stresses bazaars and picnics to a much greater extent than any of the larger parties. Ceremony, of course, played an impor-

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<sup>40</sup>The People (New York), December 27, 1891.

tant part in the party's shows. One New York meeting was described as follows: Mrs. Martha Moore Avery<sup>41</sup> ended with a salute:

Dear Red Flag, symbol of peace on earth,  
I salute you with the all Hail Hereafter!  
[applause] . . . Comrade Alexander Jonas  
held the German address ending with a few  
stirring lines from the poet Freiligrath,  
at the close of which the band struck up  
the Marsaillaise. [Then a] chorus of 100  
young girls performed a series of evolu-  
tions that marked out the letters S. L. P.  
. . . [After this came the] ball lasting  
till 7 A. M.!<sup>42</sup>

Such activity undoubtedly was impressive. In the last analysis, however, the show had to be replaced by something solid, if members were to be held. Inasmuch as party members were thought to understand the nature of the ultimate revolution,<sup>43</sup> something had to be given them to sustain day to day interest. Reynolds thought it could be activity; an advertising campaign emphasizing open air meetings with adequate speakers on high "soap boxes," with

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<sup>41</sup>Mrs. Avery, of Boston, was a paid campaigner for the party for several years. The People (New York), 1894-1895 passim.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., October 29, 1893.

<sup>43</sup>Verne L. Reynolds, The Party's Work (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1925), p. 3.

subscription cards ready if the speaker mentioned The People, and provision for a cash collection.<sup>44</sup> Others concentrated almost exclusively on The People as the agency to use for party advertising. Party members were instructed, for instance, to secure at least one subscription per month for the paper, and to place a copy on the newstand, at the member's expense.<sup>45</sup> It seems to the author that The People would never convert anyone; yet Henry R. Korman, today one of the most influential members in the Pacific Northwest, joined the party after reading The People.<sup>46</sup>

The People, and the Socialist Labor Party itself, prided itself above all else on its scientific nature and scientific outlook. As expected, the party's basic premise had been the economic nature of man. Party members were supposed not to get "their Socialism from their inner consciousness, but from study of economics and history."<sup>47</sup> Oddly enough, the party did not expect the average man to

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 10-15.

<sup>45</sup>Arnold Petersen, Disruption and Disrupters (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1935), inside front cover.

<sup>46</sup>Personal statement made to the author by Henry R. Korman.

<sup>47</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1893.



realize he was economically determined. Rather the party realized that the average man, not recognizing the scientific determinism of the party, would actively persecute party members. Hence the party member must be a martyr. One of the statements, to be answered affirmatively, in the Section Omaha catechism of 1896, was

are you willing to endure hardship, pain, loss of friends, ridicule and contempt, for the success of the principles represented by the Socialist Labor Party?<sup>48</sup>

Obviously, the party was using the expectation of martyrdom to attract. The attraction of becoming a martyr was perhaps best stated by Reynolds when he instructed the faithful to tell each new member that

There will be nothing in it for you as long as you remain with us but give, give, give. Of your time, of your energy, of your very self. There is never any take . . . If you do good work for the revolution, even the best of work, you will receive credit only from a small handful of revolutionists; nothing but damnation from everyone else. The better work you do for us the worse hated you will be by others.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>The People (New York), April 15, 1896.

<sup>49</sup>Verne Reynolds, The Party's Work, pp. 37-38. Italics in original.

One of the permanent dichotomies within the party has been and still is its appeal to the moral, one might even say religious, nature of man while insisting that it is only the economic nature of man which is of effect in life. Nearly always the member's belief in the party transcended any economic base, and in fact, usually was a religious belief, sometimes parallel to faith in religion. Shepard B. Cowles, a party member from Trufant, Michigan, put it this way:

I realize that Socialism "true" is based upon the bedrock of humanity. It is the best religion and the highest morality. IT IS REFORMATION THAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE REFORMED AND CIVILIZATION THAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE CIVILIZED. Verily it is salvation and God with us. The Socialists really are the true sons of God. They are the highest degree of humanity. Socialism as taught by The People and its platform as the only basis of the Brotherhood of Man--that glorious state on earth long desired and foretold. Let us love and worship Socialism with all our might and work for it as salvation from the clan of legal thieves and from the devil's hell on earth.<sup>50</sup>

By making party membership a moral religion, the

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<sup>50</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1893. Capitalization in original.

attraction for the martyred was confirmed. This has remained one of the strongest attractions of the party.

While assuming the guise of a religion, at the same time rejecting bourgeois Christianity, the party followed "apostolic" maxims, so labelled by De Leon himself.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the party, in a sense trying to prove itself unalterably "right" always welcomed the addition of ministers to its ranks.<sup>52</sup> Presumably, the party reasoned, a minister based his selection of political party on moral grounds. Officially, the party always attacked the opiate of the people;<sup>53</sup> unofficially, it attuned its moral outlook to that of middle class Protestant Christianity. The party was obviously proud of a party gathering in which

Beer and all liquors were tabooed. To show how pleasant the entertainment was, it may be sufficient to state that the Germans present swore off drinking beer henceforth.<sup>54</sup>

Middle class morality got an "approve" stamp, even

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<sup>51</sup>The People (New York), January 7, 1894.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., April 26, 1896

<sup>53</sup>Verne Reynolds, The Party's Work, p. 30.

<sup>54</sup>The People (New York), January 14, 1894.

while the party was prating the orthodox Marxist position on religion. As to the organized church, the American Sabbath was labelled hypocrisy<sup>55</sup> and the American clergy were characterized as men who were "bribed to keep their minds riveted on the glories up in the skies."<sup>56</sup> Such outlooks were respected, as general principles, though not, of course, in individual cases. It was acknowledged that the "overwhelming majority" of party members were non-churchmen.<sup>57</sup> At the same time the party insisted it was only the bourgeois church, and not "true" religion, which was evil. Supposedly party members perceived

the fact, with varying degrees of clearness, that Jesus has been put out of the churches and the prophets out of the synagogues; that the houses the religionists call the "houses of God" have been retransformed into "houses of merchandise," and that the Pharisee is again in possession. Accordingly, they give parsons and churches a wide berth.<sup>58</sup>

There is some indication, however, that while this attitude was expected by the party, the grass roots level

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., September 22, 1895.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., January 5, 1896.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., August 4, 1895.

<sup>58</sup>Loc. cit.

was neither exacting nor doctrinaire. Section Holyoke, one of the most active in the party, once considered specifically the question of the party and religion.

The opinion prevailed that religion was the private concern of the individual and the party has no fight with churches except when we are attacked from that side.<sup>59</sup>

The contact between the party and the Christian Church was not large, of course. Most of the ministers who associated with the party were of the group roughly described as Christian Socialists. But there were many preachers who came to the defense of the party. Even such a respected clergyman as Washington Gladden endorsed the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>60</sup>

The Christian Socialist was faced, in the 1890's, with a peculiar situation: though the party derided the church, Christian Socialist ministers had only the party, of organized socialist bodies, which could be supported. Some Christian Socialist ministers, such as Herbert Casson, actually became party members. Far from accepting the

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., January 6, 1895.

<sup>60</sup>"Socialism and Christianity" The Chautauquan (Chautauqua, N. Y.), November, 1899, p. 138-141.

normal Marxist statements toward the church, these preachers sought out and emphasized a Christian nature in the party movement, even going so far as to make the Socialist Labor Party itself a religion. Reverend James K. Applebee (who was to become a party member) in an address called "Socialism and the Trades Unions" insisted that

all the facts of the Deity tell the story of Socialism, if we had eyes to see it and ears to hear it.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, joining the party became the method of salvation; only the socialists were true missionaries; only the socialists did real fine work in establishing peace and good will on earth.<sup>62</sup> Most preachers, however, in contrast to the party and the party Christian Socialists, were still classified as merely "defilers of the sect of the Nazarene."<sup>63</sup> To be moral and to be saved one needed the gospel of socialism.

The gospel of socialism, as preached by the party, required a rigid hierarchical organization, apparently so

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<sup>61</sup>The People (New York), February 11, 1894.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., February 25, 1894.

<sup>63</sup>Open letter to Reverend Heber Newton, Ibid., December 6, 1896.

that truth could be fully understood. We have noted, several times in this work, the extreme importance laid by the party upon organization. So extreme was it, in fact, that anarchism came to be a most hated word. In Boston, on October 13, 1901, a month after McKinley's assassination, De Leon delivered a speech, "The Beast Behind Czolgosz."<sup>64</sup> It was one of the most popular speeches De Leon ever gave, as 130,000 copies were ordered by October 22.<sup>65</sup> De Leon maintained that to be an anarchist was a sin, and, furthermore, it precluded one from being a Socialist. Though De Leon admitted that Kropotkin expressed the ideas of Marx, he also insisted that his Marxism and his Anarchism were antithetical.<sup>66</sup> The basic fault of anarchism, thought De Leon, is that it did not recognize the social nature of government and of production.<sup>67</sup> Fortunately for the Party, however, the anarchist could never infiltrate the socialist domain, for,

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<sup>64</sup>The People (New York), October 19, 1901.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., November 2, 1901. The large number ordered may be exaggerated, inasmuch as the October 26 issue of the paper is the first to list the speech as published.

<sup>66</sup>Daniel De Leon, Socialism versus Anarchism, new edition (New York: National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1921), p. 35.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

as the donkey, decked with a lion's skin, betrayed himself by his braying --braying is a quality inherent in donkeydom--so will the bray of anarchy inevitably betray the donkey crew that tries to borrow glory from the lustre of Socialism by decking themselves with our feathers.<sup>68</sup>

In the last analysis, an anarchist was known by the company he kept. An anarchist, not being within the party, could not foster socialism. In fact, the party felt that, regardless of doctrine, "anarchistic" talks hurt socialism.<sup>69</sup>

Anarchists, of course, generally drew the fire of patriotic organizations because of their lack of national patriotism. The Socialist Labor Party never attacked the anarchist on that ground because the Socialist Labor Party itself never claimed to be a patriotic organization. The party, while not patriotic, never called for actual violation of law, but rather, on the whole, has been very law abiding. For the United States' Constitution and constitutional forms, it seemed to have had great respect.

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<sup>68</sup>The People (New York), March 12, 1893.

<sup>69</sup>Loc. cit. The talks so condemned were "Lectures on Socialism" to be given by "Edelmanites." This latter group were apostates from the Socialist Labor Party who were condemned along with Ida Van Etten and John Edelman. See The People (New York), January 31, 1892.



Although Judge Butler could deny citizenship on the grounds that the party was "inimical to the Constitution of this country,"<sup>70</sup> there is no evidence that the organized party ever opposed the document per se. An election flier of 1893, in fact, stated that the Socialist Labor Party

should be supported by all liberty loving citizens who stand upon the constitution of the United States and are ready to support and defend it against any and all of its enemies.

A vote for the Socialist Labor Party is a vote for the grand principles of the constitution and American liberty.

Down with Tories and long life to the constitution.<sup>71</sup>

Even while the party has always maintained a 'revolutionary' position, they have at the same time appreciated the role of the present constitutional state. John Dewey, for instance, was condemned by H. Gaylord Wilshire, at the time a leading party member, because Dewey could not see that "industry must be transferred to society [the Socialist Laborite 'revolution'] through the medium of the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., June 10, 1894.

<sup>71</sup>Statement by Moritz Ruther, candidate for Lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts. Ibid., September 3, 1893.

present state."<sup>72</sup> The Socialist Laborites, in principle, identified themselves not with subversion, but with constitutionalism; not with dictatorship of the proletariat but with democracy. Granville Forrest Lombard even went so far as to say that the "Socialist is the true Democrat, and the Socialist Labor Party is the only true Democratic Party."<sup>73</sup> Semantically, this meant that to be either a revolutionary or a democrat, one had to be a Socialist Labor Party member. The party's U. S. patriotism, in principle at least, was unquestionable. Part of the patriotism the party had, however, may have sprung not from feelings of Americanism, but rather through fear. It was thought that party members

must if possible remain alive until the revolution, and outside of jails, so we can continue the agitation. We must for that reason always do the right thing. Never make a serious mistake.<sup>74</sup>

Such patriotism as they had, however, did not cause them to look favorably upon the so-called patriotic

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<sup>72</sup>The People (New York), September 13, 1891.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1893.

<sup>74</sup>Verne Reynolds, The Party's Work, p. 38. Italics in original.

organizations. The organization of the Grand Army of the Republic, for instance, was pictured by De Leon as always ready to loot the treasury or attack workers.

While they put on airs of the incarnation of Americanism and Republicanism, they are actually setting up an aristocracy of brag, in which "sons of veterans" and "grandsons of veterans" begin to crop up as the early invertebrate limbs of a prospective and fully vertebrated privileged cast; while they strut about as chips of Mars, their conduct in innumerable instances is that of "law and order," their guns and swords are always for sale to capital . . .<sup>75</sup>

But even De Leon honored the spirit of Americanism, though he placed labor in the center of American historic tradition. He pointed out that while soldiers were important, it was labor's production that won the Civil War.<sup>76</sup> As it was not at all loyal to the capitalist system, the party felt, further, that true patriotism was limited to socialists. De Leon once pointed out that it would be "a mistake to represent, even by implication, that capital is patriotic."<sup>77</sup> The conclusion is inescapable that the party

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<sup>75</sup>The People (New York), May 28, 1893. In Socialist Labor phraseology, "law and order" meant something akin to "third degree methods."

<sup>76</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., July 23, 1893.

considered itself loyal, patriotic, and American.

Marx and the European Marxists, of course, deprecated nationalism and national patriotism even though they were never able to rise above it. Only such giants as Bebel could, in the last analysis, remain true to the principles of international Marxism in the face of nationalistic war. The Socialist Labor Party, in the 1890's, regarded itself as a part of the international movement. But yet it appeared that they would not have except for the fact that

Capitalism is international, and  
so is Socialism to be, and Socialism  
would not be international if  
capitalism were not.<sup>78</sup>

The party had no delegates at international congresses of socialists from the International's founding till 1881. In that year Peter J. McGuire, the A. F. of L. leader who was then a party member, was a delegate to the Chur Convention.<sup>79</sup> To the Second International's founding congress in 1889, the party sent delegate J. F. Busche, then the party's editor.<sup>80</sup> The connection with the Second

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<sup>78</sup>Eric Hass, The Socialist Labor Party and the Internationals (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1949), p. 39.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

International was maintained throughout the Nineties, though the party was often piqued at the activity of the international body. What it especially disliked was the tendency, notably on the part of the British Fabian element, to allow representation to members of the middle-class.<sup>81</sup>

The reason for maintaining contact with the Second International was not principle; it was that De Leon would "rather not have it appear that the Socialist Labor Party is disconnected from the 'international movement'".<sup>82</sup> As time passed, however, it was clear that the International was paying too much attention to the newer Socialist Party of the United States, and not enough to the Socialist Laborites. For several years such a situation remained, and in 1919 the party left the International.<sup>83</sup> Since that time the party has never affiliated with any international body, although it has opened its own satellite

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 45. Particular scorn was bestowed on G. Bernard Shaw, for advocating the seating of an American bourgeois, Winston. Bechtold and Mrs. Charlotte Stetson, party members, however, also voted for the admission of Winston. Winston, as a result, became a "bad" word in party circles. See above, p. 135

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

parties in Britain and in certain Commonwealth countries.

It is perhaps strange that a party as foreign as the Socialist Labor should be cautious on the issue of internationalism. But perhaps the recedence of enthusiasm for the International can be looked upon as a result of the increasing Americanization of the party. In 1893 The People pointed out that one in three of the workers in manufacturing were foreign born.<sup>84</sup> De Leon felt this was fine, inasmuch as foreign born persons were more apt to be socialistically inclined.<sup>85</sup> But the foreign born, while they were socialistically inclined, distrusted the ballot,<sup>86</sup> the chief Socialist Labor weapon. De Leon often expressed the opinion that economic organization and political consciousness had to go hand in hand. Yet when selecting between those who were economically conscious and those who were politically aware, the party preferred the latter. It protested mass importation of laborers<sup>87</sup> and feared that the foreign born would lower American working

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<sup>84</sup>May 7, 1893.

<sup>85</sup>The People (New York), December 23, 1894.

<sup>86</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., April 12, 1891.

standards.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, there was great rejoicing within the party, in 1896, when a new sight was seen: "increasing numbers of American workingmen at Socialist lectures. This had never happened before."<sup>89</sup>

The movement for Americanization of the party, mentioned previously,<sup>90</sup> always militated against real internationalism, because it stressed American interests and American provincialism. And perhaps it was just such American provincialism that caused the one major economic arm of the party, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, to fall. The party, in fact, had a European concept to draw as its chief allurements, belief in the class struggle. American laboring men never have accepted the principle of class against class.

In theory the party was close to Marx. According to Marx, the class struggle was the very essence of history. To the Socialist Laborites, as to the strictly orthodox Marxist, there was no such thing as

no strife between capital and labor.  
Whenever harmony has existed between

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., May 7, 1893.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., March 1, 1896.

<sup>90</sup>See above, p. 48.

these two factors it has always resulted in the oppression of labor.<sup>91</sup>

The party, however, always claimed that it did not array "class against class." The party theory was rather that it recognized "the part that classes already exist, and . . . brings clearness into [the] struggle."<sup>92</sup> Not only did the struggle already exist, according to the party, but the outcome was already known: complete and certain victory for the proletariat.<sup>93</sup> The only question a Socialist Laborite had was the exact timing of the successful revolution. In the 1890's the day of attainment seemed close. On returning from an agitation tour in 1895, De Leon wrote:

Everywhere the field is promiseful. The people are ready to listen to Socialism. All their false gods are played out. Above the wrecked and mangled remains of these rises the unsullied sun of the social revolution. It makes one smile to think of the efforts of the silly capitalists to buttress themselves into power against the proletariat. So long as buttresses can keep the proletariat down and in awe no buttresses are needed; when the buttresses may be

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., April 12, 1891.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1896.

<sup>93</sup>Loc. cit.



needed they will be found useless.  
 The swelling tide of the oppressed  
 and long-suffering class will swamp  
 all dams and obstacles. That tide  
 is certainly rising. Its swell  
 extends far and wide.<sup>94</sup>

There was, in this quotation, an urgency, and some emotionalism. Such emotionalism seemed strangely out of place in a party devoted to strictly scientific concepts. In a first page editorial in The People, De Leon answered the commonly brought charge that the Socialist Labor Party (and its paper) were "too scientific." De Leon pointed out the absurdity of the charge, maintaining that the party had to be serious and cold. De Leon charged that the lack of scientific approach was the basic reason for the lag in American Marxism, and decried the leftists in America who "cracked jokes."<sup>95</sup> In much the same way, De Leon, in his opening speech to the First Convention of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, indicated that socialism was not the product of man, but merely the inevitable result of economic conditions. Thus every intelligent, i. e., scientifically oriented, man must needs be a

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., May 26, 1895.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., June 9, 1895.

socialist.<sup>96</sup> The whole appeal to science by the party reminds one of the social Darwinists, except that the latter approached the capitalist system pragmatically while the party projected its "scientific" analysis into the future.

While the party was praising science, it nonetheless decried the introduction of the scientific method in certain areas.<sup>97</sup> In spite of the prohibition against joining forces with anyone else, many party members apparently cooperated with an Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League of the 1890's. The People urged all party members to unite

for the defense of our homes and persons against the lawless invasion by police and alleged medical bullies, under pretext of preserving the public health, and violently inflicting themselves upon us.

All lovers of liberty desirous of entering into a defense of our constitutionally guaranteed personal rights should communicate with

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<sup>96</sup>The People (New York), July 5, 1896.

<sup>97</sup>The author found no evidence that the party opposed scientific advances in the manufacturing fields. That they did not object to such was probably because of their overriding faith in the ultimate success of their cause, a success wherein they would be the manufacturing plant operators.

Comrade F. Scrimshaw.<sup>98</sup>

One can perhaps understand the reluctance of the party to go along with the progress of medical science; it is more difficult to understand the party position as regards agricultural machinery. The party paper duly noted the introduction of the first steam plow on a Washington state wheat ranch. De Leon noted that three men could now do the work where twenty-five were formerly employed. Wondering about the extra twenty-two, De Leon decided that they were

probably in Seattle, [sic] whistling for a job, and, who knows, hurrahing for the People's party so as to furnish the farmers with some more cash wherewith to buy some more steam plows and displace some more workingmen.<sup>99</sup>

De Leon's assumption that the unemployed would seek a Populist solution to their troubles was perhaps excusable in the 1890's; yet he believed then, and the party believes now, that farmers, particularly, should be made acutely aware of the scientific nature of socialism. Yet De Leon, like Marx, never understood the bourgeois role of the

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<sup>98</sup>The People (New York), April 29, 1894.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., June 11, 1893.

farmer.

The lack of understanding so prevalent in the socialist attitude toward the farmer was actually visible in all fields. The party actually doubted the ability of the average man. The party believed that the political knowledge of the average citizen was obtained

in fragmentary scraps of information and misinformation, derived from the confusing and contradictory statements and arguments of the various political parties. In consequence of this . . . politics becomes a matter of guesswork, uncertainty, excitement, corruption and disappointment.<sup>100</sup>

Thus the average man had neither the approach nor the reasoning power to analyze correctly the political situation. To be a socialist, it was thought, required application of the scientific (and inductive) method to the economic facts of history.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, the party felt that the character of the masses was formed (inductively) by the result of the economic forces which play upon the mass.<sup>102</sup> On the one hand the party held to a firm belief

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<sup>100</sup>The People (New York), September 13, 1896.

<sup>101</sup>Daniel De Leon, Abolition of Poverty (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1945), p. 7.

<sup>102</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1893.

in the materialist conception of history, with its corollary, the formation of character because of economic conditions; on the other side the party claimed that unless an objective and analytical study was made of economic conditions, men did not become socialists.<sup>103</sup> The conclusion that was sure to come was never stated by the party: if economic conditions do not, by themselves, cause socialists, i. e., if study is needed, there is nothing inevitable about the revolution. In fact, if the theory that those who control economics also control education be accepted, the revolution was not only not inevitable, it could not occur at all. Though the party regarded itself as coming into being only as the exponent, in the class struggle, of the working class,<sup>104</sup> in fact its appeal was not economic, or even scientific, but emotional.

As a stimulator of the emotions of the lower class, the party of the 1890's was seldom excelled. An analysis of the party techniques of the 1890's shows but few attempts to concentrate on a scientific approach; it showed many techniques designed to interest and attract

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<sup>103</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1893.

<sup>104</sup>Charles Corregan, "The Socialist Labor Party's Appeal" The Independent (New York), 52 (October 13, 1904), p. 841.

workers and voters, regardless of doctrinaire orthodoxy.

A party agitator, first of all, was to have a card index on each prospect. The party member was to keep a record

of every pamphlet he [the prospect] reads and his reaction thereto. What his "bug" is, if any. Whether religious or irreligious or any other information of aid in telling how to handle him.<sup>105</sup>

Keeping track of prospects was highly recommended, and was apparently standard practice. Yet De Leon personally may not have approved of such tactics. He took violent issue with Fabian Tract Number 64 which advocated getting the vote of a man even though he was not a convinced socialist. De Leon wrote that an honorable movement would have no use for the "votes of those that do not support its views."<sup>106</sup>

Another much-used technique, which had little to do with scientific socialism or inductive reasoning, was that of infiltration. We have already discussed attempted control of the national labor unions on the national level, where the party had virtually no success. On the local level, however, both in political and economic fields,

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<sup>105</sup>Verne Reynolds, The Party's Work, p. 22-23.

<sup>106</sup>The People (New York), August 18, 1895.

there was some success, and party members weren't particular whom they infiltrated. On September 24, 1892, as an example, a Republican Party meeting in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, was successfully infiltrated, to the point that the party controlled the selection of a chairman.<sup>107</sup> In spite of the many De Leon statements against affiliation with the enemy, many of the socialists of New Britain, Massachusetts (groups which De Leon organized) joined a bourgeois (A. F. of L.) Federal Labor Union. They joined, presumably, to "keep it out of mischief."<sup>108</sup> Only after it became defunct did the Socialists go on to organize a S. T. & L. A. mixed alliance.

Of all the techniques utilized by the Socialist Laborites for party advancement, two stand out: the mass distribution of literature and the public debate meeting. These were, in the 1890's, and are today, the principal means of propaganda. The leaflets were to be kept simple, of course, in recognition of the fact that Socialist Labor

prospects, no matter how mature they are in other fields, are children, kindergarten pupils, on our subject.

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<sup>107</sup>The People (New York), October 9, 1892.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., July 5, 1896.

They should be treated accordingly.<sup>109</sup>

The national organization never failed in its belief in the effectiveness of the written word, as evidenced the continuous braggadocio in The People as to the number of leaflets and tracts printed, sold, and/or distributed.<sup>110</sup> Yet the local level often had serious reservations as to the effectiveness of such a technique. Both Section Haverhill, Massachusetts and Stapleton, New York suggested that posters be used in place of tracts "which are never read."<sup>111</sup> In fact, Section Stapleton thought that the distribution of leaflets merely branded the Socialist Laborites as cranks. Section Lynn, Massachusetts was also disturbed that results were so meagre even though vast quantities of literature had been distributed.<sup>112</sup> In spite of the doubts raised, however, tracts, leaflets, and pamphlets remained as the number one outlet for party propaganda.

The open meeting was also much esteemed. During

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<sup>109</sup>Verne Reynolds, The Party's Work, p. 22-23.

<sup>110</sup>Examples of such are numerous. For one, see The People (New York), May 8, 1898.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1893.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., September 27, 1896.



campaign time, the party tried hard to secure open debates with bourgeois candidates. Such a debate, of course, couldn't help but benefit the Socialist Labor Party, inasmuch as it meant recognition by the large parties that such a group existed. In most cases the larger parties disdained recognition, but a few notable debates were held.<sup>113</sup> As was to be expected, the party secured more inter-party debates on the local candidate level than on the state or national. There is some evidence that such meetings on the local level were at times consciously packed by the socialists; but such a conclusion may come from The People's method of reporting such meetings. Certainly audience reactions were reported to be overwhelmingly socialist.<sup>114</sup> Normally the Socialist Labor's opponents were apt to be only the Populist and the Social Democratic candidates, though at times a local meeting was held at which all parties were represented. Such a one

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<sup>113</sup>Especially prominent were (1) the Harriman-Maguire debate, which occupied the entire first page of The People on July 7, 1895, and was later published in pamphlet form, (2) the De Leon-Berry debate in 1913, which as a pamphlet has gone through five editions. (It is now published under the title Capitalism vs Socialism (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1947), (3) the De Leon-Carmody debate in 1912, published as Socialism vs 'Individualism' (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1942).

<sup>114</sup>It was typical for The People to report an audience

was the 1894 Columbus Day debate in Haverhill.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to debate meetings, of course, the party sponsored thousands of lectures. Nearly every section had a well-worked out program of lectures, and all of the "natural leaders" of the party were continuously speaking before various groups. Lectures, in fact, were the one standard activity in all party sections. Normally Sunday afternoon or evening was devoted to listening to lectures. The better lecturers, such as Joseph B. Keim, Peter E. Burrowes, Lucien Sanial, Moses Hilkwitz (Morris Hillquit), and De Leon himself were "on the circuit," and delivered their special speeches to a number of different sections. Keim specialized in speeches emphasizing religion, such as "Socialism From a Bible Standpoint."<sup>116</sup> Hillquit concentrated on the history of the movement "German Social Democracy"<sup>117</sup> and on techniques "Our War and Our

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vote or 'show of hands', always overwhelmingly socialist in response, sometimes even unanimous. For a typical example, see the report on audience reaction to the J. Wilson Becker (S. L. P.) and William King (Populist) debate, The People (New York), August 4, 1895.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., October 21, 1894. Republicans, Democrats, Prohibitionists, Populists, and Socialist Laborites were represented, the first by Henry Cabot Lodge.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., December, 1893 and January and February, 1894 passim.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., December 29, 1895.

Weapons."<sup>118</sup> Burrowes was a poet at heart and packed emotion in his addresses attacking the capitalist class in "Our Return to Barbarism"<sup>119</sup> and the "Crucifixion of Labor."<sup>120</sup> Sanial was an appealing speaker, and attempted to stir the proletariat to action with his widely given "Appeal to Labor."<sup>121</sup>

In gaining converts, the effectiveness of this lecture method may well be questioned; its primary result seemed to be to stir and guide the faithful, not to persuade others. The lecture itself was inevitably followed by a question period, a period that at times had serious consequences. Although aberrations from the prepared line were not frequent in prepared speeches, questions frequently brought out differences in thought which the national office would not tolerate. It was a question period that caused the downfall of Herbert Casson.<sup>122</sup> Even De Leon himself once was badly trapped in the question period,

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<sup>118</sup>The People (New York), March 1, 1896.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., March 3, 1895.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., November 4, 1894.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1895.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., October 20, 1895.

though he managed, by a small lie, to extract himself.<sup>123</sup>

One other technique, used by the party in their activity, is worth mentioning. The party, in its literature, tracts, speeches, and meetings frequently employed the name-calling device. And they perhaps carried it as far or further than any Marxist party ever has. Some samples have already been cited in other connections; it may be sufficient here merely to recall such statements as

E. L. Godkin pillories his own stupidity  
in the December "Atlantic" . . . <sup>124</sup>  
The Conceited Ignoramus Adolf Strasser.<sup>125</sup>  
Gompers' Rag-Bag, the "American Federationist"<sup>126</sup>  
Populists are not only dishonest, but stupid<sup>127</sup>. .  
the pure and simple humbugger of labor,  
Mr. Samuel Gompers . . . <sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>After his anti-Czolgosz speech in Boston in 1901, a questioner asked De Leon why, if the S. L. P. did not want "unscientific" votes, it required all members of the S. T. & L. A. to vote the Socialist Labor ticket. De Leon answered that the S. T. & L. A. had no such provision. Technically he was right; only officers of the S. T. & L. A. had to support the S. L. P. See p. 180 above and Daniel De Leon, Socialism vs Anarchism, p. 24-25.

<sup>124</sup>The People (New York), December 13, 1896.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., April 5, 1896.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., July 5, 1896.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1896.

<sup>128</sup>Loc. cit.

. . .the A. F. of Hell . . .<sup>129</sup>  
 We never feel kindly toward fakirs, ignoramuses,  
 and pollywogs like James R. Sovereign. . . .  
 When the cockroaches get too close we step  
 on them.<sup>130</sup>

As indicated in these examples, the real vituperation of the Socialist Labor Party was reserved for liberals, labor leaders, and non-party Marxists who, like the Socialist Labor Party, had the interest of the proletariat at heart.

In fact, the party's attitude toward these other reformers is one of the most difficult to explain or study. The modern Socialist Labor Party, beginning in the 1890's, has never, for long, cooperated with any other reformist or leftist political group. In fact a resolution adopted on September 14, 1888, read

Resolved, that faithful allegiance to the Socialist Labor Party and severance of all connections with other political parties be a condition of membership in the Socialist Labor Party--all other parties being considered as forming one reactionary mass.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid., April 19, 1896.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., April 5, 1896.

<sup>131</sup>Workman's Advocate (New Haven) August 10, 1889, as quoted in Howard H. Quint, The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement (Columbia, S. C.: U. of S. C. Press, 1953), p. 55.

In spite of such a prohibition, the sense of which was constantly reiterated in The People, the record shows many attempts, on the part of local sections, to combine with other left-wing groups to present a united front. After disheartening results in San Francisco in the general election of 1894, the American section proposed that either (1) all party members move into one district, or (2) the party join with the Populists.<sup>132</sup> The German Section was against such a coalition, and received due praise from The People for its doctrinaire position. The San Francisco section continued to worry the national office, however. In July, 1895, the San Francisco colleagues, under the editorship of Reverend Joseph A. Scott (a Party member Christian Socialist) started the weekly Socialist. The venture was praised by The People<sup>133</sup> and warmly welcomed by De Leon.<sup>134</sup> In a month, however, De Leon criticized the Socialist's soft attitude toward Populists, especially when the Socialist insisted that a "Socialist called a Populist is still a Socialist."<sup>135</sup> When the San Francisco

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<sup>132</sup>The People (New York), November 25, 1894.

<sup>133</sup>July 21, 1895.

<sup>134</sup>The People (New York), August 4, 1895.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1896.

colleagues continued to praise unity and fusion in the left wing, the national executive repudiated the paper as a "Christian Socialist" sheet.<sup>136</sup>

In 1896 the Socialist Laborites in Ohio adopted a policy of unity with other leftist groups, but with an important proviso: while candidates didn't have to be party members, they did have to run on a Socialist Labor platform. In this case it was the German sections, not the American, who took the lead. Again it required the actual intervention of the national office before such feelings of harmony could be eliminated.<sup>137</sup> W. Meyer, a delegate from Toledo to the Ohio State Convention, finally settled the matter by the neat formula: "whoever is not actively with us is against us."<sup>138</sup>

In Baltimore, in April, 1895, there was yet another "unity" convention. In this one Walter Vrooman, the Populist, tried to get city-wide support from left-wingers. Vrooman failed to get personal support, but the convention went ahead and adopted a socialistic platform and nominated socialist (but non-party) candidates to run under a

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1896.

<sup>137</sup>See above, p. 73

<sup>138</sup>The People (New York), June 14, 1896.

Socialist Labor label. Vrooman's forces, intent on unity, then held a rump convention and nominated the same ticket.<sup>139</sup> De Leon first noted that the Socialist Laborites could not prevent an appropriation of its name (the party had never polled enough to be legal in Maryland) but went on with a very compromising statement:

Nor would such appropriation be necessarily ill; it may even be a good and cheering sign. In so far as the April convention . . . set up a sound Socialist platform . . . its taking of our party name was no cause for sorrow with us, on the contrary.<sup>140</sup>

Even though the Socialist Labor Party officially had had nothing to do with the nominations, therefore, it urged Marylanders to vote for the candidates, a position flatly contradictory to the party's doctrine.<sup>141</sup>

In early 1897 a strange situation developed in Saint Louis. Here one August Priesterbach had left the party to support Bryan in 1896. In early 1897 he had asked for re-admission to the Party. The Section organizer, Lewis C.

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<sup>139</sup>The People (New York), September 15, 1895.

<sup>140</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., November 3, 1895.



Fry, refused Priesterbach's petition, but the refusal was overruled by the section, 28-24.<sup>142</sup> Fry refused to accept the decision, claiming a two-thirds vote was necessary, and he apparently then wrote up some minutes of the meeting, got them approved by the Missouri State Committee and sent them to the National Executive.<sup>143</sup> The N. E. C. upheld Fry and ordered the Section dissolved and reorganized.<sup>144</sup> Fry did give Priesterbach an opportunity to rejoin, provided he would sign a statement that he supported the class struggle and the party constitution.<sup>145</sup> After Priesterbach scorned Fry's proposals, a large portion of the Saint Louis comrades formed the Independent Socialist Labor Party, a thoroughly socialist group which rejected the leadership of the National Executive. They regarded "as we have been in the past we shall also be in the future--

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<sup>142</sup>The People (New York), February 14, 1897.

<sup>143</sup>Some of the Expelled Members of the Section, Why Was Section St. Louis dissolved by the Nat. Exec. Committee A Statement Addressed to the Sections and Comrades throughout the Country (n. pl. /St. Louis/: Cooperative Publishing Co., n. d. [1897/]), p. 3.

<sup>144</sup>The People (New York), February 14, 1897.

<sup>145</sup>Some of the Expelled Members of the Section, op. cit., p. 1. The St. Louis revolvers pointed out that Priesterbach shouldn't have to swear to something (belief in class struggle) that other party members were not required to swear to! See Ibid., p. 2.

Socialists" as their slogan.<sup>146</sup> In the St. Louis case, it seems to be only the action of the National Executive which prevented some recognition of the Populists as reformers, and in this case even the National Office was not strong enough to prevent schism.

The non-party reformers of the eighteen nineties were uniformly rejected by the national office of the party, regardless of their stripe. At one extreme the party rejected Joseph R. Buchanan (The Story of a Labor Agitator) and actively harrassed him at public meetings.<sup>147</sup> Populists such as Senator Peffer, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, and N. A. Dunning were equally attacked.<sup>148</sup> Tom Watson was thoroughly condemned,<sup>149</sup> and even a man as radical as Wayland was brought to task. For a couple of years The People carried advertisements for The Coming Nation. De Leon, in a column addressed to Wayland, began to point out "errors" in the paper in April, 1894,

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<sup>146</sup>Some of the Expelled Members of the Section, Why Was Section St. Louis Dissolved . . ., p. 5.

<sup>147</sup>The People (New York), August 23, 1896.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., March 24, 1895.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1896.

however.<sup>150</sup> Yet Wayland, in spite of the attacks on him, continued to urge support of the Socialist Labor Party from 1895 until 1898.<sup>151</sup>

The National Office was always the "watchdog of the party" as to purity and non-cooperation. A blank verse poem in The People informed party members that a

Socialist who calls self a Populist  
is not a Socialist  
Socialism stands on a moral basis or right  
A Socialist who puts on a Populist  
cloak is immoral.  
The Way to Sin should not be made easy.<sup>152</sup>

Thus Socialist Laborites (especially on the national level) frowned on and officially avoided any cooperation or contact with most of the reform parties of the 1890's. It was very difficult, however, for them to avoid contact and cooperation with the Social Democratic Party which sprang up in the last half of the decade. The attempt of the Socialist Labor Party to avoid harmony with the Social Democratic Party led to the biggest split in the

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<sup>150</sup>The People (New York), April 8, 1894. The Coming Nation dropped its advertising in May, 1894. The author doesn't know if there be any connection between the attack and The Coming Nation's action.

<sup>151</sup>Quint, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>152</sup>The People (New York), September 15, 1895.

history of the S. L. P., a split which eliminated in the political sphere, as the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance experiment had eliminated in the economic sphere, any budding influence which the Socialist Labor Party might have had in America.

## CHAPTER VII

### RELATION WITH DEBSISM AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY

As long as the Socialist Labor Party had no economic arm (no party-controlled trade union) the political Marxists within the party had to cooperate with or infiltrate into the various unions then in existence. In such a situation it was possible for individual Socialist Laborites to maintain cordial relations with trade union men. Conversely, trade union members who had socialistic tendencies would support the Socialist Labor Party, as the only party of socialism then available.

The Socialist Labor Party reflected this situation until 1895, when the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was founded. Until that time, The People, while castigating most labor leaders, was lenient and sometimes even friendly with the more radical and unorthodox leaders. Among the unions toward which the paper showed some friendliness was the American Railway Union of Eugene Debs.<sup>1</sup> The United Central Labor Federations welcomed the new Debs union, feeling that it could be the beginning "of an irresistible movement for social emancipation."<sup>2</sup> The party was well satisfied with the new union's first

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<sup>1</sup>The People (New York), June 18, 1893.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. cit.

convention, and party members confidently distributed The People to the railroad workers who were in attendance at the convention.<sup>3</sup> Debs was regarded as a real hero--as one who uttered "the most soundly radical views."<sup>4</sup> Yet the party did have some reservations. When the Debs organization was complete, the sole comment of The People was "so far so good."<sup>5</sup> The orthodox position taken by The People was that while the formation of the American Railway Union was a step in the right direction, the new union would not be finally successful; ultimate success was reserved for an industrial union which included not only railway workers, but all workers.<sup>6</sup>

While the party continued to show some friendliness toward Debs and the American Railway Union, the National Executive never officially approved of the movement. When the new union began to operate more closely with the Knights of Labor, however, the party was happy that harmony was "possible among elements that tend at least in

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., June 25, 1893.

<sup>4</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., July 2, 1893.

<sup>6</sup>Loc. cit.

the right directions."<sup>7</sup> Debs, as the leader of the new union, was not attacked as were Gompers, Strasser, and Powderly; to the contrary, the party always conceded to Debs what they would not concede to other labor leaders: sincerity of purpose. Although the party urged "Brother" Debs to "Come out squarely for Socialism,"<sup>8</sup> it admitted that

all the gold that could be got in the  
City Hall of Chicago could not sway  
Debs one iota from his purpose to  
benefit the workers.<sup>9</sup>

Debs, nearly alone among the major labor leaders of the nineties, was respected by The People. His personal relations with the national officers of the Socialist Labor Party seem to have been good; in late 1894 Debs and De Leon were on the same platform, and the former introduced De Leon to a Brooklyn audience.<sup>10</sup> The People, in reporting Debs's remarks, admitted that Debs "did for the workers in his audience a valuable service; at the same

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<sup>7</sup>The People (New York), June 24, 1894.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., January 20, 1895.

<sup>9</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., November 4, 1894.

time the paper pointed out that "Debs was not clear [i.e., socialist] in his thinking."<sup>11</sup> The party was sure, however, that Debs would eventually endorse socialism, and, as a result, join the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>12</sup>

The party was especially gratified, therefore, when Debs, in his Western speaking tour in 1895, continued to express socialistic ideas, and when he stated that "labor alone, even as a unit, cannot win an election."<sup>13</sup> With such views, The People was sure that he would be led to the position of endorsing independent socialist political action. De Leon had faith that when Debs realized that there were 4,149,689 more proletarians than there were people in all other classes put together in the United States,<sup>14</sup> the union leader would come out for the party ballot and would join the ranks of the socialists.

The socialists were, therefore, bitterly disappointed when Debs declared for Bryan in the 1896 election.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The People (New York), November 4, 1894.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., November 4, 1894 and January 20, 1895.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., April 28, 1895.

<sup>14</sup>Loc. Cit. The People claimed this majority for the working class, while admitting that the Middle Class was the largest single group in 1875.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., August 16, 1896.



De Leon felt that lack of class-consciousness, to him Debs's greatest failing, had caused such a political action. The Bryan campaign, of course, took place after the formation of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and there was no longer, to the party, any merits in any other union, including Debs's, regardless of structure. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that the party ever attempted any full-scale campaign of name-calling or vilification against Debs or his union. The People generally criticized his plans, speeches, and actions, yet it did so with a gentleness, for the paper, which must have made the old German socialists quite fond of Debs.

In the fall of 1896 Debs brought forward his eight-hour day plan. Debs proposed that all workers strike, if necessary, to gain an eight-hour day. The Socialist Labor Party received the plan with misgivings and some opposition. While not opposed to a shorter work week, the party felt that the eight-hour day would not solve unemployment, and thought that labor, through strikes, would never get an eight-hour day anyway.<sup>16</sup> The People thought that the Debs idea (that a strike could alleviate something) was

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<sup>16</sup>The People (New York), December 6, 1896.

"unpardonable in a would-be labor leader."<sup>17</sup> The party hoped, of course, that Debs would see the folly of attempting reform, and join the Socialist Laborites in revolution. De Leon, in a January, 1897, open letter to Debs, tried to show Debs the error of his ways. After citing the fact that both the S. L. P. and Debs wanted the Cooperative Commonwealth, De Leon pointed out that such aspirations were ultimately revolutionary, not reformist. And, the Socialist Laborite maintained, there were only two weapons by which revolution could be accomplished: "ballots and bullets."<sup>18</sup> Inasmuch as Debs had said that "ballot . . . cannot be relied upon to execute the will of the people," De Leon wondered if Debs could or would explain the tactics he proposed to achieve the Cooperative Commonwealth.<sup>19</sup> Debs never answered the open letter,<sup>20</sup> but perhaps he did think about its contents, for in June, 1897, Debs did announce his plans for establishing the Cooperative Commonwealth.

Debs's new tactical plans were involved in his "Social Democracy," a plan for all liberal and for all

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<sup>17</sup>The People (New York), December 6, 1896.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., January 10, 1897.

<sup>19</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., July 11, 1897.

socialist<sup>21</sup> workers to concentrate themselves in a western area, where they could institute the socialist society. The People immediately issued an article warning against "the Duodecimo Edition of the New Jerusalem Known as the 'Debs Plan'."<sup>22</sup> The article itself was written by the Chicago section of the party. It said

These people have dragged you through the wilderness of populism into the slough of silver, and now by a mirage of false hopes they would lead you into a thorny desert of utopianism. . . . [But the] Cooperative Commonwealth must be self-contained, self-sufficient; . . . it cannot be on less than a national scale. . . . It is more practical to revolutionize the whole than a part.<sup>23</sup>

Two weeks later, De Leon echoed the words of the Chicago section in an article entitled "HOMUNCULUS" in which he again pointed out that the colonization scheme was useless, and further that the American Railway Union had not succeeded because it had not been politically

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<sup>21</sup>In advocating the 'Social Democracy', Debs at last announced himself as a socialist, and declared that the Cooperative Commonwealth could be attained only by means of socialist activity. McAlister Coleman, Eugene V. Debs A Man Unafraid (New York: Greenburg, 1930), p. 185.

<sup>22</sup>The People (New York), June 13, 1897.

<sup>23</sup>Loc. cit.

active.<sup>24</sup> Still, however, De Leon closed with "warm esteem for the good intentions of Mr. Debs," even while warning people not to follow Debs.<sup>25</sup> The Johnston, Rhode Island Beacon<sup>26</sup> was less careful of Debs's feelings:

If you want a Cooperative Commonwealth you must teach your followers to take possession of one they've built, not to go out west in a "wild goose chase."<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps because of the gentleness of The People's attacks on him, Debs was slow to answer the Socialist Labor charges against his plans. In time, however, the columns of the Railway Times came to be, in De Leon's words, filled with "scurrilous denunciation of the membership of the S. L. P."<sup>28</sup> De Leon assured correspondent Louis Billings of Terre Haute, however, that regardless of Debs's attacks, nothing personal would "affect our

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<sup>24</sup>The People (New York), June 27, 1897.

<sup>25</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup>A Socialist Labor Party fortnightly paper published in 1897 and 1898. It was suspended in May, 1898, and its subscriptions were filled out by The People. It was often quoted by De Leon in editorials. See Ibid., May 8, 1898.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., July 11, 1897.

<sup>28</sup>Loc. cit.

conduct."<sup>29</sup> De Leon would have probably remained on his 'moderate' track, had it not been for (1) Debs's decision to make 'Social Democracy' a political movement as well as a colonization scheme,<sup>30</sup> in direct competition with the Socialist Labor Party, and (2) the New York support which the Debs plan picked up, consisting of many New York Jews whom the party had expelled.<sup>31</sup>

After the incident between Sparks, of the Abendblatt, and Schwarz, of the S. L. P., in November, 1895, the Abendblatt staff had been purified and several prominent Jewish comrades had been expelled from the party because of their role in the matter. Notable among the expellees were Morris Winchewsky, Meyer Gillis, Meyer London, Louis E. Miller and Abraham Cahan. These expelled Jews were all extremely competent.<sup>32</sup> Before the Sparks-Schwarz trouble,

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<sup>29</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., July 25, 1897.

<sup>31</sup>Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States 1828-1928 (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1928), pp. 172 and 191-192.

<sup>32</sup>Winchewsky was a poet, who had had poems published regularly in The People. See December 9, 1894 and July 14, 1895 for examples. He had, shortly before the Abendblatt attack, been the principle speaker at the unveiling of a portrait of Karl Marx at a party function in Boston. Gillis, London, and Miller were all editors and speakers for the party. Cahan had been a constant speaker for the

the party had congratulated these men, especially so when they had set up the daily Abendblatt as a party socialist propaganda voice.<sup>33</sup> After their expulsion, of course, these Jews lost no love for the organization, and in 1897, drawing ever further away from the party, the same group of men started a socialist, but anti-party, second daily, the Jewish Daily Forward<sup>34</sup> contemporaneously with the formation of Social Democracy by Debs. Almost immediately these New York Jewish socialists had recognized merit in Debs's plan, and the Jewish Daily Forward, edited as it was by the expelled Socialist Laborites, came out strongly for the Social Democracy.<sup>35</sup> Some of these Jewish socialists, in fact, had participated with Debs from the very first "call" of the new Social Democracy.

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party, had served on the National Executive Committee, and was the editor of the party Jewish organ, Zukunft. He was one of the original founders of the Arbeiter Zeitung, founded in 1890--see Morris Hillquit, Loose Leaves From A Busy Life (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 35--and was in nation-wide demand for party functions. The Chicago section, for instance, requested the National Executive for Cahan's services for their 1895 Labor Day celebration. See The People (New York), April 28, 1895.

<sup>33</sup>The People (New York), August 12, 1894.

<sup>34</sup>Nathan Fine, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>35</sup>McAlister Coleman, op. cit., p. 195.

Former Socialist Laborites in the original New York branch of the Social Democracy included Isaac Hourwich, Meyer London, Abraham Cahan, Louis E. Miller, and Morris Winchewsky.<sup>36</sup> These men, from the first, gave the New York Social Democracy a clear insight into the actual nature of the De Leonite party, and they would have nothing to do with it. The People, of course, thoroughly disapproved of the former S. L. P. element in the Debs entourage, and, after it became clear that the new Social Democracy had political overtones, the paper became quite vindictive. It termed formation of the new Social Democracy as the

last gasp and gathering together of a variety of idiosyncratic elements--some Utopians, some crooks, some a mixture of both--whose day dreams and efforts for the last ten years or so have been to fight the S. L. P. because its clear-sightedness, honesty, and discipline left no elbow room for the dreams of visionaries, or tolerated no crookedness.<sup>37</sup>

Yet in spite of the anti-S. L. P. bias supposedly carried

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<sup>36</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>37</sup>The People (New York), August 29, 1897.

by the politically-minded Debs,<sup>38</sup> De Leon kept "a soft spot for Mr. Debs."<sup>39</sup> De Leon doubted Debs's veracity, however, as it was inconceivable, to De Leon, how one who was in 1897 a socialist could have said seventeen months previously, that he was not a socialist.<sup>40</sup> De Leon didn't seem to realize that strict maintenance of such a position meant that the Socialist Labor Party growth would be greatly hampered, inasmuch as all 'converts' would be suspect. D. R. Davis, a Socialist Laborite from Brighton, Illinois, still doubted that Debs was a socialist in the fall of 1897. Davis noted that Debs "said he was a socialist," but that he gave no indication that he knew what the word meant.<sup>41</sup> The party, of course, was extremely disappointed when Debs shared a convention platform with the hated James R. Sovereign. It rather put Debs in a class with the so-called "labor fakirs," and led Davis to pray

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<sup>38</sup>In reality, Debs's supposed anti-S. L. P. bias had a real basis in fact, for Debs himself "held that the Socialist Labor party was too intolerant, exclusive, and German to hold all the revolutionary socialists in a catholic embrace." "Socialism in the United States" (editorial), Independent Magazine (New York), LII: 266, January 25, 1900.

<sup>39</sup>The People (New York), August 15, 1897.

<sup>40</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., September 12, 1897.



Oh, Lord, deliver us from capitalism;  
~~/but/~~ if you have but one gatling gun  
 we implore you to first turn it on the  
 labor and reform fakirs.<sup>42</sup>

It is natural that those members of the Social Democracy who were not former Socialist Laborites should think of unity between the two organizations, especially so as the colonization scheme seemed to work in well with an established socialist party. Not knowing the true and exclusive nature of the S. L. P., one such member, John Foster, of the Pennsylvania Social Democracy, Branch One, contacted the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party to enquire what steps ought to be taken "to unite the Old Socialist Labor Party and the New Social Democracy."<sup>43</sup> The People answered the query in no uncertain terms. After pointing out that the two organizations did not believe in the same principles, the paper went on to note even if the Social Democracy have some principles worthy of unity, the "tactical principles of the two keep them irreconcilably apart."<sup>44</sup> The National Executive thus spoke its piece on unity, and it was never to change its

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<sup>42</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., September 5, 1897.

<sup>44</sup>Loc. cit.

mind. Nonetheless, unity factions were continuously to be born within the Socialist Labor Party, and these factions sapped any strength the old party might have gained, in favor of the new. Unity factions, without exception, left the Socialist Labor Party for the Social Democracy (and its successors, the Social Democratic and Socialist parties), not vice versa.

In June, 1898, a serious division appeared within the Social Democracy between those favoring emphasis on the colonization scheme and those committed solely to political action. The split became so serious that several members bolted Social Democracy to found the Social Democratic Party of America. The leaders of the "bolters" included former Socialist Labor Party members Joseph Barondess, Isaac Hourwich, Louis Miller, and F. G. R. Gordon, as well as A. F. of L. member Sylvester Keliher, who, at one time, had been favorable to the party.<sup>45</sup> About the only non-S. L. P. among the original bolters was Victor Berger. Debs, after wavering, gave up Social Democracy as a colonization scheme, and joined the politically-minded division, thus assuring the successful launching of the new party. Of the thirty-three signers of the first official pronounce-

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., July 10, 1898.

ment of the Social Democratic Party, twelve were former members of the Socialist Labor Party, and several more had had close connection with it.<sup>46</sup>

As expected, The People's attitude toward the new political bent was one of continued viciousness.

Whatever has become of the American Railway Union? In our viciousness we said that it was disbanded when the "Social Democracy of America and Patagonia" was started last year . . . but now somehow it was absorbed into the S. D. of A., a better higher stronger body. . . . But now this higher, stronger body kicked itself to pieces. Did it kick to pieces its absorbees also? <sup>47</sup>

The old party maintained its disdain for the new, and pointed with pride to the low Social Democratic vote when compared to the Socialist Labor vote in the fall elections of 1898. The Socialist Labor total vote in the fall of 1898 was 82,182<sup>48</sup> while the Social Democratic total was 12,411.<sup>49</sup> The margin of "victory" of the Socialist Labor-

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<sup>46</sup>Former S. L. P. members included James F. Carey and Margaret Haile of Massachusetts, Morris Winchewsky, Louis E. Miller, Isaac Hourwich, Isaac Phillips, and Joseph Barondess of New York, G. A. Hoehn and C. F. Meier of Missouri, Jesse Cox of Illinois, and F. G. R. Gordon of N. H.

<sup>47</sup>The People (New York), July 3, 1898.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., January 8, 1899.

<sup>49</sup>McAlister Coleman, op. cit., p. 203.

ites was great nearly everywhere, but in New Hampshire it was only seven to five.<sup>50</sup> Although Socialist Laborites were still able to crow after the general elections, they were considerably taken back by the results of the December municipal elections in Massachusetts. The rejoicing over the victory of Moritz Ruther in Holyoke on a Socialist Labor ticket<sup>51</sup> was somewhat dampened by the Haverhill results. There

a party [Social Democratic]--carrying the word "Socialist" as part of its name, and with a platform taken substantially from that of the Socialist Labor Party--has recently sprung up . . . and virtually carried the city.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the "sweep" of the city of Haverhill, the Social Democrats had sent former party member James F. Carey to the Massachusetts legislature. De Leon, in spite of his earlier statements as to having no principles in common with the Social Democrats, nevertheless called the

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<sup>50</sup>The People (New York), December 4, 1898. The S. L. P. received 350, the S. D. 263.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., December 18, 1898. Ruther won over the capitalist candidate for alderman of Holyoke by ninety-five votes. There was no Social Democratic party in the field.

<sup>52</sup>Loc. cit.

successful Haverhill party guilty of 'piracy.'<sup>53</sup> He later admitted, however, that they probably hadn't stolen the party platform, as the Haverhill crowd were branded "reformers," which Socialists were not.<sup>54</sup>

The election results, especially of the James F. Carey party in Haverhill<sup>55</sup> centered the interest of all socialists on the coming campaign of 1900. Originally the Socialist Laborites had not been too worried by Social Democracy, for Debs himself, on June 12, 1897, had said that the campaign would "doubtless be fought under the banner" of the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>56</sup> After the elections of 1898, it was sure that there would be no electoral unity between the parties.

The spectacular success of the Haverhill party, of course, led many Socialist Laborites to the thought that together, the two parties could virtually control Massachusetts. In this vein Squire E. Putney, long time party

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<sup>53</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., January 22, 1899.

<sup>55</sup>See above, p. 61 for the background of Carey's presence in the Social Democratic Party.

<sup>56</sup>The People (New York), July 4, 1897.

work-horse from Somerville, Massachusetts<sup>57</sup> on December 19, 1898 asked that the National Executive Committee of the S. L. P. enter into a conference with the National Council of the Social Democracy.<sup>58</sup> Putney pointed out that the people who elected Carey had all left the Socialist Labor Party with Carey, in fact, that the party by its "viciousness" had driven them out. The answer of Henry Kuhn, for the National Executive, heaped abuse on Putney, noted that his opinions (in spite of five years as a state officer in the party) "can scarcely be considered of value." In the light of Putney's views, the N. E. C. pointed out that Putney's place was "with them, not with us."<sup>59</sup> In the letter, one of the cardinal principles of the party was violated: Putney, a member in good standing, was called mister rather than comrade. Putney, taking many Massachusetts comrades with him, accordingly left the party.

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<sup>57</sup>Putney was, in 1899, secretary of the Massachusetts State Committee, a post he had held since 1894. The position was elective. He had also served as organizer of the Boston American Section (1891-1896) and the Boston Central Committee (1892-1899). He had run for virtually all elective offices under the party label, including the posts of state governor (1892), secretary of state (1894), auditor (1891), treasurer (1893), attorney general (1895).

<sup>58</sup>The People (New York), January 8, 1899.

<sup>59</sup>Loc. cit.

Though the orthodox doctrinaires felt the party was stronger because of the defection, Massachusetts soon showed De Leon otherwise.

De Leon was not only to be dismayed on the electoral front; it was becoming increasingly apparent that most socialist newspapers were going to back Debs in preference to the Socialist Laborites. There were, of course, those papers on which expelled party members were working, such as the St. Louis Brauer Zeitung, and the Tageblatt's of St. Louis, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, all of which declared for Debs.<sup>60</sup> The socialist Western Miner which supported Debs's plans from their inception perhaps had the clearest view as to the real accomplishments and future of the Socialist Labor Party:

For twenty years it has been the custom of the S. L. P. in this country to hold meetings in back rooms of saloons, with the same audiences week after week and a new listener only when barkeepers were changed; this method of spreading the propaganda of Socialism has been so successful that at the present ratio of increase in the orthodox wing, the co-operative commonwealth will be greatly introduced about the year 17,327.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1897.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., July 4, 1897.

Even official party newspapers were apt to stray into the Debs fold. Though the Abendblatt, as a party organ, had been purified of the Forward crowd,<sup>62</sup> it nonetheless gave prominence to Putney's letter, expressed evident sympathy with the Putney point of view, and printed a shortened version of Kuhn's letter.<sup>63</sup> The editor of Abendblatt was notified that

in publishing reports of the proceedings of the N. E. C., the same must be given exactly as they emanate from this N. E. C; and that the N. E. C. demands unswerving allegiance to the party from all party organs.<sup>64</sup>

After this warning the Abendblatt held firm, and spoke no more of 'conciliation' with the Social Democrats. Not so the New Yorker Volkszeitung, however, which began to challenge the National Committee's attitudes in March, 1899.

The Volkszeitung was published by the Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association, the same organization which put out both The People and Vorwärts, the official English and German organs of the party. In effect the Volkszeitung had always been an unofficial party organ,

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<sup>62</sup>See above, p. 244.

<sup>63</sup>The People (New York), January 22, 1899.

<sup>64</sup>Loc. cit.



since its inception in 1878. Early editors had always been party members, such as Adolph Douai and Alexander Jonas.<sup>65</sup> The publishing association by agreement could admit to membership only members of the Socialist Labor Party in good standing.<sup>66</sup> But there was no provision for removing expelled or resigned members from the association rolls. The inevitable result, in a party like the S. L. P., was that there were probably, within the association itself, perhaps as many party-haters as party men! An association of party-haters publishing the two official organs, The People and Vorwärts, led to trouble. On January 28, 1898, the association elected an expelled party member, Rudolf Modest, an anarchist, to the Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association Board of Directors.<sup>67</sup> The General Committee of Section Greater New York (the general committee served as an executive body for the New York section) which used the association's Volkszeitung as its official organ, protested Modest, the motion of

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<sup>65</sup> John R. Commons and other, History of Labour in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1926), II, 224.

<sup>66</sup> Henry Kuhn, Socialist Labor Party, Part I of Henry Kuhn and Olive Johnson, The Socialist Labor Party During Four Decades 1890-1930 (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1931), p. 28.

<sup>67</sup> The People (New York), February 13, 1898.

protest being made by Henry Kuhn, the party's National Secretary. The protest passed the general committee unanimously.<sup>68</sup> The New York position was then put before the publishing association the next night by Hugo Vogt, editor of Vorwärts, but the protest was upheld only by a slim vote twenty-five to twenty-four.<sup>69</sup> This indication that party control was so tenuous resulted in a party call to New York German comrades to join the association and build the majority. They apparently responded; the vote ousting Modest on February 18, 1898, was thirty-eight to eleven.<sup>70</sup>

But trouble with the association was only beginning. In spite of the fact that the Vogt resolution stated that the Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association was

nothing else than an administrative  
branch of the Socialist Labor Party,  
clothed, by reason of legal exigencies,  
with the business function of conducting  
the publication of the party organs,<sup>71</sup>

conducting  
organs,<sup>71</sup>

the association was not, as far as its daily Volkszeitung was concerned, beholden to the party. Matters remained

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<sup>68</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>69</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1898.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., February 13, 1898.

relatively calm for about a year after the Modest expulsion during which time the Cigarmakers controversy, mentioned earlier,<sup>72</sup> caused so many expulsions that the publishing association actually came to have majority of "expelled" or "resigned" members! As a result, the publishing association became bitterly critical of the party. At a meeting of March 23, 1899, the association urged a greater tolerance of Socialist ideas, pointed out the corruptness of the General Committee of Section Greater New York, and, significantly, declared that the official party attitude toward Debsism was "mud-slinging."<sup>73</sup> In addition, the association voted down a motion by Hugo Vogt to endorse the S. T. & L. A., by a margin of two to one.<sup>74</sup> De Leon hated to see his union creation be voted down, and hence he proposed first, to bring about the surrender from the association of all property of The People and Vorwärts, and have the papers be issued directly by the party, and second, to re-form the publishing association. De Leon's desired plan, as far as a publishing association was concerned, was to have automatic dismissal from the

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<sup>72</sup>See above, pp. 252 ff.

<sup>73</sup>The People (New York), April 2, 1899.

<sup>74</sup>Nathan Fine, op. cit., p. 170.

association for any member for whom a party membership were withdrawn or given up.<sup>75</sup> De Leon's underlying assumption, in this controversy, was that the Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association was a creature of and subordinate to the party, and hence was subject to the party orders. Such an assumption as that was not borne out in fact.

The Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association was the company which owned and published the daily German Socialist paper, the New Yorker Volkszeitung.<sup>76</sup> When the party's English organ, the Workmen's Advocate, was in serious financial trouble, the party signed the following agreement with the publishing association:

1. The Socialist Labor Party agrees to discontinue the publication of the Workmen's Advocate with the issue dated March 28, 1891, and to transfer the subscription list of the same to the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association.
2. The Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association agrees to publish on April 5th, 1891, the first issue of The People and to fill out the undischarged balance of all the pre-paid subscriptions of the Workmen's Advocate.

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<sup>75</sup>The People (New York), April 2, 1899.

<sup>76</sup>Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon" in Daniel De Leon The Man and His Work (New York: National Executive Committee, S. L. P., 1934), I, 19.

3. The Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association agrees to reserve so much of the fifth page of The People as the S. L. P. may desire for its official use; . . . the space used by the S. L. P. shall be under the sole and exclusive control of the said S. L. P. or its National Executive Committee.<sup>77</sup>

In addition, the agreement provided for a joint election of the editor of The People, and a referendum by the party in case the election were deadlocked.<sup>78</sup> The German party organ, Vorwärts, was, in effect, merely the weekly edition of the Volkszeitung, and had been adopted as the party organ some time after its formation. If the insistence of the modern party that the present Socialist Labor Party shall be dated from 1890 be correct, the conclusion was inescapable that the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association had existence independent of the party, and that The People, other than the fifth page, was subject to the control of the Volkszeitung corporation. In practice the association did not interfere with De Leon's control of The People. In the eyes of De Leonites, the real crime of the Volkszeitung was in its tolerant attitude especially toward the Debsites. As a correspondent asked:

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<sup>77</sup>The People (New York), June 11, 1899.

<sup>78</sup>Loc. cit.

How did a prominent Scandinavian "S. L. P.er" become a Debsite? He "caught that 'malady' by being a constant reader of the Volkszeitung."<sup>79</sup> The Volkszeitung, in its tolerance, depreciated the leadership of De Leon, calling him a "pope," "boss" and other such epithets. The De Leonite correspondents of The People pointed out that they were proud of terms like that, that the whole group of words "Pope," "Boss," "Tyrant," or "intolerant editor . . . suits us . . . all right."<sup>80</sup> The National Executive Committee, with Henry Stahl dissenting, accused the Volkszeitung of giving "aid and comfort to the manifestly corrupt 'Haverhill Social Democracy,' a "crime" of which the Volkszeitung was undoubtedly guilty.<sup>81</sup> But although The People was loud in its praise of the National Committee, several sections of the party aligned themselves against the National Executive Committee and in favor of the more tolerant Volkszeitung. Section New Haven, for instance, was struck with an epidemic of 'Debsomania' from which, according to the De Leonite reporter, "a number . . . did

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<sup>79</sup>The People (New York), April 23, 1899.

<sup>80</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1899.

not recover."<sup>82</sup> The New Haven vote was twenty-nine to nine condemning The People and its editor.

Oddly enough, the showdown between the two forces, De Leon and the Volkszeitung, did not come over "Debso-mania" but rather over the highly technical problem of whether the proletariat paid any taxes. De Leon took the Marxist view that the capitalist takes three-fourths of the product of labor, and, from this share,

pays the taxes and therefore owns the Government. Any dispute between capitalist factions as to the cost of their Government, or as to the mode of apportioning taxes between them, is therefore of no interest whatever to the working class.<sup>83</sup>

De Leon termed as scandalous the Lassalleian view, held by the Volkszeitung, that the workingmen pay any taxes. In its proof that workers pay taxes, the Volkszeitung was charged with being injurious to the labor movement of New York by being "disloyal to the party, clumsy in its tactics, [and] recklessly untruthful in its 'fact'."<sup>84</sup> The running battle over the 'taxation' issue continued

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., July 9, 1899.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., July 14, 1895 and April 23, 1899.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., April 23, 1899.

throughout the spring of 1899 and into the summer, with De Leon constantly accusing the publishing association of plans for destroying the party. The editor of the Volkszeitung, Hermann Schlüter, of the Brewers, was absent during the main exchange, but he stood behind the chief author, Alexander Jonas, on his tax views, when he returned to his post.<sup>85</sup> To the contrary, Schlüter opened the Volkszeitung up to statements from various groups attacking De Leon, the most effective of which was an indictment by Cigarmaker's Union Number 90. Being outnumbered and angry at Schlüter's conduct, all the De Leonite members of the Board of Directors of the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association thereupon resigned, and were replaced by pro-Volkszeitung party members led by Morris Hillquit.<sup>86</sup>

The resignations assured the control of the paper to the anti-National Executive faction, and shifted the scene of hostilities to the New York General Committee. This committee was a representative body for the Section New York, and was clothed with the power to perform acts which were valid in the name of the section, unless later

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<sup>85</sup>The People (New York), April 2, 1899.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., June 25, 1899.



"overthrown by a general vote" of the section.<sup>87</sup> Lawyer Morris Hillquit led the fight in the general committee, but the issue was lost, and the Volkszeitung was condemned after some stirring argument by De Leon, forty-seven to twenty.<sup>88</sup> During the debate, Stahl, an N. E. C. member, pronounced the general committee to be corrupt, and labelled it hopeless and demoralized because its members "subordinate themselves to certain individuals in whom they repose implicit confidence and [whom they] follow . . . blindly."<sup>89</sup>

After this defeat in the general committee, the Schlüter-Hillquit faction, in order to propagandize its side of the controversy, used the subscription list of The People and sent an English Monthly Edition of the Volkszeitung, dubbed the "Taxpayer" by both friend and foe, to each subscriber.<sup>90</sup> Hillquit maintained that the

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<sup>87</sup>The People (New York), July 2, 1899.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., June 4, 1899. The Hillquit forces, however, did carry the day in the Fourth Assembly District Branch, 50-21. The Fourth District was one of the best of the S. L. P. districts in New York City, averaging sixth (out of thirty-five) in total party vote in the elections of 1895 through 1898.

<sup>89</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., May 14, 1899.

association had a perfect right to use the subscription list; technically he was right. The feelings of De Leon were understandable, of course; the association was using The People's own lists to destroy the paper's arguments. The only possible solution for De Leon was to withdraw The People and Vorwärts from any connection with the association. Therefore the De Leonite National Committee put the following to a general vote of the party:

Shall the party sever all connection between the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association; continue, through its National Executive Committee, the publication of its organs The People and Vorwärts and demand from the said Association the surrender of all property belonging to said organs, including their respective mailing lists and the amount of subscription paid in advance.<sup>91</sup>

Though the party proposal was a violation of the contractual rights of the association, the association also wished to sever the connection. Shortly after the announcement of the referendum the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association notified the party that the association wished to terminate the contract on July 15, 1899, and asked for opening of negotiations toward that

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., June 11, 1899.

end.<sup>92</sup> The National Executive Committee stated its unwillingness to compromise on any solution, but appointed a committee to work out the details, nonetheless.<sup>93</sup>

Meanwhile, as returns began to come in, it was obvious, that, as usual, the proposal of the National Executive Committee, which had been referred to the party membership, was going to pass nearly unanimously.<sup>94</sup> Very few votes were recorded against the De Leon proposition. In New York, however, the party majority was by no means certain. On July 8, 1899 at the semi-annual meeting of Section Greater New York held for the election of delegates to the General Committee, the showdown came. Both sides were present in large numbers; hand to hand combat between the two factions ensued.<sup>95</sup> The result was a draw, and the selection of two General Committees. Both sides took action the next day. The General Committee of the Volkszeitung

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<sup>92</sup>The People (New York), July 9, 1899.

<sup>93</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., June 18, 1899 to July 9, 1899. The final vote was 2042 to 98. Only one section, Baltimore, failed to give the De Leonites a majority, and only 18 of the 95 sections who voted failed to cast a unanimous ballot. Ibid., August 20, 189

<sup>95</sup>Henry Kuhn, Socialist Labor Party, part I of The Socialist Labor Party During Four Decades 1890-1930 (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1931), p. 41.

faction deposed all the officers of the party, from National Secretary on down to section organizer, while the De Leonites collected a "defense" force of twenty-five men.<sup>96</sup> When the "new" National Officers demanded the property of the party, (headquarters of the party were then in the Volkszeitung Building) De Leon and the twenty-five refused to turn anything over and a second fight resulted, ending in some serious wounds. The fight was over only when the police arrived; De Leon was left in possession of The People, and the loyal De Leonites moved all party belongings next day. The new address of the De Leonites was given the widest possible dissemination.<sup>97</sup> The De Leonite New York City Executive Committee then arbitrarily suspended all members of the General Committee who had signed the Hillquit-Volkszeitung deposition order, and called for a new General Committee meeting in the D. A. 49 meeting place.<sup>98</sup> The party constitution was explicit on expulsion or suspension; either had to be done only by the section concerned, and by a two-thirds vote.<sup>99</sup> The party, in the

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>97</sup>The People (New York), July 16, 1899.

<sup>98</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>99</sup>Some of the Expelled Members of the Section, op. cit., p. 3.

second week of July, was in a ticklish position: each faction had expelled and suspended their opposition, and virtually everyone in the party stood suspended. As to legality, perhaps the Volkszeitung's group had as fine a claim as the De Leon, for they had used the instrumentality of the General Committee, which more closely represented all sections in Greater New York than did the Executive Committee, used by the De Leonite faction. And the Hillquit faction had the presence of mind to appeal to the National Board of Appeals, the final board of appeal in party disputes.<sup>100</sup>

The Hillquit faction was quite sure of a favorable consideration from the Board of Appeals, for that body had shown an increasing tendency to be cooperative with Debsism. The Board had always ruled, however, in accordance with the party constitution. Thus they had ruled incipient Social Democrats out of the party; at the same time at least one member of the board was "ashamed of this action all his life."<sup>101</sup> The Board of Appeals' ruling was

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<sup>100</sup>Henry Kuhn, Socialist Labor Party (New York: Labor News Co., 1931), p. 44.

<sup>101</sup>Board of Appeals member Karl Ibsen (later expelled) said this in regard to holding up the suspension of Eugene Dietzgen, a long time party member, for having supported Debs's party. The People (New York), July 2, 1899.

favorable to the Volkszeitung faction; the board recognized Hermann Schlüter as the new secretary of the new General Committee. The Board of Appeals certainly had the confidence of the Ohio sections of the party; the sections had nominated Robert Bandlow, secretary of the board, as candidate for governor of Ohio, for which position he was campaigning when the ruling was given.<sup>102</sup> The De Leonites refused to accept the Board of Appeals' ruling; rather they ignored it, and, at the next national convention, the National Executive managed to get through a vote eliminating the Board.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile the De Leonites held their New York General Committee meeting (July 15). The committee upheld the national officers and completely reorganized the Section New York.<sup>104</sup> A "huge" mass meeting was then held on July 24 in Cooper Union to celebrate

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<sup>102</sup>The People (New York), June 11, 1899. Even though he was declared expelled, hence cutting his vote with the De Leonites (and the Hillquit faction urged boycotting the polls completely) Bandlow still received 2439 as compared with 5910 for the De Leonite candidate for lieutenant-governor. Ibid., December 3, 1899. Undoubtedly also, many Volkszeitung socialists voted for "Golden Rule" Jones, who was running for governor on an independent ticket. Ibid., November 19, 1899.

<sup>103</sup>Henry Kuhn, Socialist Labor Party (New York: Labor News Co., 1931), p. 46.

<sup>104</sup>The People (New York), July 23, 1899.

"rejuvenescence" of Section Greater New York.<sup>105</sup> Over 2,000 socialists were reported in attendance.<sup>106</sup>

Though the split started in New York, and via a New York newspaper, it quickly spread to other areas, and there was a flurry of questioning of the National Executive Committee. The Volkszeitung group, electing Henry Slobodin as National Secretary,<sup>107</sup> continued to use The People circulation lists to distribute their side of the story. The use had its results. Sections Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cleveland, all large sections, as well as numerous smaller ones, had to be suspended en toto.<sup>108</sup> The suspended sections, of course, considered themselves Socialist Labor sections, affiliated with the Slobodin National Committee. Unquestionably many individuals in "loyal"

<sup>105</sup>The People (New York), July 23, 1899.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., July 30, 1899.

<sup>107</sup>Slobodin could not be termed a reformer, nor could his views be termed unorthodox. He expressed himself in very "De Leonite" principles and ideas. See his long address, "Ballot or Bullet" in Ibid., July 4, 1897.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., August 6, 1899. Section Chicago actually proposed a change in seat of the National Executive Committee, and urged all sections to withhold financial support for the party until the new seat be determined by party vote. Change of seat, of course, by the party's constitution, meant change of all personnel of the national office. Ibid., August 20, 1899.

sections also left the De Leonite wing for the Slobodin group, though the number would be hard to estimate. The De Leonite National Executive Committee hit upon the idea of having the "loyal" sections swear an affirmative oath, and then published the list of the "juring" sections under the title "Tidal Wave."<sup>109</sup> The sections listed, however, included those "reorganized," and hence were not a true indicator of the scope of the revolt. One month after the split, however, The People could report only eighty-eight De Leonite sections, including any which may have been reorganized.<sup>110</sup> At least four of these sections were not active enough to cast a ballot officially on the party referendum of the issue.<sup>111</sup> In addition to these eighty-four "loyal" and active sections, there were nine sections which were De Leonite in the referendum, but which hadn't taken the trouble to send in their loyalty oaths.<sup>112</sup> A liberal estimate would indicate that there were approximately one hundred De Leonite sections after the split.

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<sup>109</sup>The People (New York), August 6, 1899 through September 10, 1899.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., August 20, 1899. This count included sections affiliated with Greater New York.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., September 17, 1899.

<sup>112</sup>Loc. cit.



When this number was compared with an even two hundred sections at the time of the 1896 convention,<sup>113</sup> (and there had been a constant chartering of sections, 1896-1898) it showed a loss of membership to the De Leonite wing of at least fifty percent.

It would be expected such a loss would have caused much grief to the remaining "loyal" party members. Just the reverse is true. The Colorado State Central Committee passed a resolution stating that they did

not in any way regret the loss of non-class conscious and discord-breeding members--regarding such loss of membership as necessary for the good of our cause.<sup>114</sup>

De Leon expressed similar views.

After July 10, 1899, both sides published a People, and it was inevitable that the whole controversy, especially as it concerned the use of names and emblems, would end in the courts of New York. A temporary injunction secured by the Volkszeitung faction to prevent De Leonite use of

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1896.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., August 20, 1899.

the title The People<sup>115</sup> turned out to be legally defective.<sup>116</sup> There followed suits and counter-suits, and, although De Leon was fully prepared to give up the title The People to the opposition, the matter got so bogged down in legal technicalities that the Kangaroos (as the Volkszeitungers were called) gave up all legal attempts to gain the paper's title in September.<sup>117</sup>

The Slobodin faction, instead, tried, in New York State, to nominate candidates for office under the party emblem. According to New York law, the Secretary of State has the judicial function of deciding between opposing factions of the same party. Secretary of State McDonough, on October 13, 1899 ruled the De Leonite wing should get the emblem and the party name for the ballot.<sup>118</sup>

The Hillquit-Slobodin faction, though much more favorable toward the Social Democratic Party than the De Leonites, did not, immediately, join Debs's group. Rather they continued for a year as a Socialist Labor Party, hoping to be confirmed in control of the party by the courts or by

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., August 27, 1899.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., September 3, 1899.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., September 24, 1899.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., October 22, 1899.

the 1900 party convention. Because the Slobodin faction did not coalesce with the Social Democrats, outsiders' view of the split was somewhat in error. Lack of official cooperation between the Slobodin executive committee and the Debsites seemed to indicate to outsiders that the split was unrelated to the new party. Hillquit's favorable attitude toward the Tammany candidate in De Leon's district seemed to confirm the fact that the breach had nought to do with the Social Democrats. In fact, there were some who thought that the split had been engineered by Tammany Hall in order to ruin the party, which in 1898 had been the balance of power in the fall elections.<sup>119</sup> Such a view hardly squares with the long-standing incipient division between the Volkszeitung and De Leon, which was present long before the party was the third force, or even the fourth. De Leon himself claimed there had been aberrations on the part of the New York daily as early as 1894.<sup>120</sup>

After the defeat in the New York courts, the Slobodin-Hillquit faction was not prepared to go into the

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<sup>119</sup>The Independent (New York), August 1899, as quoted in The People (New York), September 10, 1899.

<sup>120</sup>The People (New York), April 2, 1899.

electoral field in the fall of 1899, and it contented itself with urging its followers to boycott the polls.<sup>121</sup> Only in Massachusetts did the "broad" wing of the Socialist Labor Party openly support fusion with Debs's party and support of Debs's candidates. And in Massachusetts there was moderate socialist success on the local level; so much success, in fact, that with three exceptions The People was silent as to the results of the December elections, in marked contrast to its attitude in former years.<sup>122</sup> The results in Massachusetts, for the S. L. P., were very bad. The Socialist Laborites trailed the Social Democrats in many cities, and their one officeholder, Moritz Ruther of Holyoke, was defeated. After his defeat Ruther rationalized that petty local reasons, not socialist thought, had elected him in 1898; inasmuch as these petty local reasons had disappeared, his defeat was certain.<sup>123</sup> After all the emphasis the party had given to

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<sup>121</sup>The People (New York), November 19, 1899.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., December, 1899 passim. The paper, as usual, gave considerable space to the Socialist Labor campaigns before the elections. The exceptions were Everett, where the vote of the S. L. P. increased, Boston, where the vote for School Committee decreased but slightly over 1898, and Cambridge, where the party ran candidates for the first time. In none of these cases was the vote compared with the Social Democratic vote. Ibid., December 24, 1899.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., December 31, 1899.

not wanting non-socialist votes, Ruther's admission that he was not elected by socialist voters is revealing.<sup>124</sup> Exactly why the party should participate in elections at all was hard to understand, for the success in elections was given as a prime reason for the party's defeat:

I [Socialist Labor Alderman Ruther] took such a determined and uncompromising stand in the Holyoke city Government that the class struggle of our movement became so clear as to frighten away all unthinking and middle class element instead of attracting it.<sup>125</sup>

The overall Socialist Labor vote, in the fall of 1899, did not show a significant decline, a fact which De Leon felt should be called to the attention of the boycotting Slobodin "kangaroos." In New York County, supposedly the center of the split, the vote declined only from 10,091 to 9,389.<sup>126</sup> At first glance, this figure seemed to indicate that the Volkszeitung campaign was a failure. Yet it did not indicate that: to the contrary, inasmuch as there were at the very most only about a thousand active members

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<sup>124</sup>Ruther stated that, in one precinct, the vote had been 105, even though only four comrades lived in the precinct. Loc. cit.

<sup>125</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., December 3, 1899.

in the party (including women, who could not vote) in Section New York, the overwhelming majority of party votes came from non-party members. The results, in themselves, proved nothing: neither that the Volkszeitung campaign was a failure nor that five hundred party members did not refuse to vote.

Throughout the last half of 1899, the Slobodin-Hillquit faction continued to publish a People, though it appeared to have been a great financial strain.<sup>127</sup> At the same time, the faction tried to get De Leon's People shut down, and did secure an injunction to do so on September 1, 1899.<sup>128</sup> De Leon refused to obey the court order on the basis that it only restrained individuals from publishing The People, and the organization could go on publishing. The courts finally took a view favorable to De Leon.<sup>129</sup> The Volkszeitung faction also appealed the decision of the Secretary of State on the name and emblem of the party; the De Leonites were again upheld in the New York Supreme Court on January 19, 1900.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1899.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1899.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., February 11, 1900.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., January 28, 1900.

Upon losing all the court cases, Hillquit (who had been the petitioner in the court action) and his faction decided to hold a Socialist Labor national convention in late January.<sup>131</sup> The convention was advertised in the Volkszeitung and in its People and there was a considerable following who recognized the convention as legal. When the call was pronounced, further, it affected the wavering Massachusetts State Organization, which, under the leadership of Martha Moore Avery, then joined the Kangaroos.<sup>132</sup> The convention was held in Rochester, New York, on January 31, 1900, and resulted in the nomination of Job Harriman, of California,<sup>133</sup> for president, and Max Hayes, of Cleveland, for vice-president. In addition, a Committee of Nine, with Hillquit as its leader, was selected to negotiate with the Social Democrats.<sup>134</sup> The committee had the power to change either the name of the party, or the candidates, or both.

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<sup>131</sup>The People (New York), [January 21, 1900]. In error, the issue was dated January 14, 1900.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., February 11, 1900.

<sup>133</sup>One of the party's prominent pamphlet writers and lecturers, his debate with Maguire, a Single Tax man, was published by the party in pamphlet form and occupied the entire first page of The People, July 7, 1895.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., February 11, 1900.

After his nomination Harriman went on a campaign circuit, and was well received in most areas. His campaign was reported carefully and advertised by the Volkszeitung's People,<sup>135</sup> and was meant to prove to the Debsites that the Socialist Labor kangaroos were significant. It apparently did: the Indianapolis convention of the Social Democratic Party, which opened March 6, 1900, nominated Debs for president and Harriman for vice-president. The Committee of Nine led by Hillquit accepted the changed nominations. De Leon cautioned his faithful to take no notice of the new Harriman-Debs coalition, stating the truism that union with the Debs forces had been the goal of the kangaroos from the first.<sup>136</sup>

In spite of De Leon's "What of it?" and "Who cares" attitude<sup>137</sup> The People constantly tried to justify its position. It published "document" after "document" establishing its orthodox position, till at last one of its sympathetic readers was forced to ask that the paper talk of something other than the Volkszeitung controversy.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup>The People (New York), March 4, 1900.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., March 11, 1900.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., February 25, 1900.

<sup>138</sup>Loc. cit.



In attacking the Hillquit faction, De Leon sometimes went further than the truth: for instance, he claimed that kangaroo Erasmus Pellenz, party candidate for Secretary of State of New York in 1895, had "never had the Party's confidence," and that The People had never publicized Mrs. Avery's "vaporings."<sup>139</sup> According to De Leon, however, it was not vindictiveness, but "just indignation" which led him to excess about the Debsite kangaroos.<sup>140</sup>

Debs's party, while nominating Harriman for vice-president as a gesture to the Rochester Richtung, did not, immediately, fully accept the kangaroos. It did, however, select a Committee of Nine to meet with the Hillquit nine, and, in spite of some temporary objections by Debs, the two groups finally amalgamated under the new title, the Socialist Party.

In the meantime, the De Leonite faction went on, confident that a

bone fide revolutionary political party  
will never be incommoded by desertions.  
It knows that physical, mental, and  
moral cripples are apt to get into its  
ranks for the express purpose of gaining  
notoriety by desertion. Such a Party,

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<sup>139</sup>The People (New York), February 25, 1900.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., January 14 [21], 1900.

instead of being disconcerted by the "deserters," is glad of the occasion that rids it of them.<sup>141</sup>

The "loyal" convention of 1900 passed in July with scarcely a ruffle, and the De Leonite party headed into the November, 1900, campaign with confidence and serenity.

Kangaroo Socialist Laborites challenged the 'regular' tickets in many states, but the De Leonite group was in each case successful in remaining on the ballot.<sup>142</sup> The winning of the ballot position turned out to be an empty victory. Everywhere the Socialist (or Social Democratic, in many states) Party outvoted the De Leon candidates, Malloney and Rammel. The Socialist Laborites garnered but 33,382 votes,<sup>143</sup> as compared with a total vote of 85,231<sup>144</sup> claimed for the party in 1899, while Debs drew 96,878. The Socialist Laborites were close to Debs only in New York, where the vote was 12,869 for Debs and 12,622 for Malloney, and in Virginia, where neither side had

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1899.

<sup>142</sup>Weekly People (New York), October 13, 1900.

<sup>143</sup>National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, Twentieth National Convention Socialist Labor Party (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1942), p. 210.

<sup>144</sup>The People (New York), 1899 passim.

campaigned, which gave 167 for the Socialist Labor Party and 145 for the Social Democrats.

The lesson of 1900 was clear enough. The American socialist wanted a party which was not orthodox to the point that it refused to have immediate goals; he didn't choose to have a party which was waiting for the revolution, but rather one which would try to socialize basic industries as soon as possible. The inception of the Debs party, combined with the dictatorial powers and inflexible views of the leaders of the Socialist Labor Party, meant that the former, and not the latter, was to be the vehicle of socialism for early twentieth century America.

Just as De Leon's class conscious trade union was doomed to failure when it disregarded normal American methods, so was his hierarchical political party destined to fail, when it denied to its American members freedom of expression and choice. The stories of both the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and the Socialist Labor Party are stories which started full of hope for the Marxists of America, but which left the hope unfulfilled.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS

The Socialist Labor Party, as reorganized in the nineties, had a good expectation of growth. The Greenback Party and the Granger movement had called attention to the increasing oppression of labor in the United States. Congress had just passed its first legislation designed to regulate trusts and monopolistic corporations. It would seem that an organization pledged to the betterment of the laboring class would have had noticeable and perhaps rapid growth. Yet the Socialist Labor Party, in the nineties, did not grow significantly, in spite of the increase of socialistic attitudes in the United States and the immigration of many who were acquainted with and sympathetic to socialism. It had moments of success and flashes of promise, but by and large it was a failure.

The reasons given for such failure are many and varied. The party itself normally blamed either the capitalists, the disrupters within the party, or the lack of readiness on the part of the American people. The majority of Americans, perhaps, would blame the inherent incompatibility of socialism with American institutions. There is much to commend this majority opinion, and it would explain why the majority of Americans did not adopt a socialist

solution to modern economic problems. But it does not explain why the Socialist Labor Party was unsatisfactory to that minority of Americans who were socialists and who believed in Marxist solutions. It is Foster's judgment that De Leon's

withdrawal from conservative trade unions, his anti-labor-party, anti-Negro, and anti-farmer-movement policies, and his abandonment of all immediate demands, all of which became Party line, had particularly disastrous consequences for the Party . . .<sup>1</sup>

Foster is only partly right. As has been shown in this study, De Leon did not withdraw from the conservative trade unions; he was removed. And many party members remained in both the A. F. of L. and the K. of L. after De Leon was rejected. These men could have continued the job of making the two large unions into socialist organizations, and in fact they did temper the bourgeois outlook of both bodies. Even De Leon thought it proper to work within and through the large unions until his final defeat in 1895.

That the Socialist Labor Party members did not convert the larger unions to socialism is not really explained by reference to party principles; there was nothing in

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<sup>1</sup>William Z. Foster, History of the Communist Party of the United States (New York: International, 1952), p. 88.

party dogma that prevented the subversion of the union; to the contrary, it was considered quite desirable. The party's difficulty in handling the trade unions resulted from the extreme centralization of its national office. There was a personal element in this. De Leon's nature demanded personal operational control of a movement, and, if this could not be, he did not allow his group to support the movement. When he was personally repudiated by the unions, therefore, he caused the Socialist Labor Party to stop its support of regular unionism. The formation of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, of course, divided the loyalty of party members and made their work in regular unions suspect. But even after the S. T. & L. A. was a reality, grassroots party support would have been given to the older unions, but for the extreme centralization of the party and the almost absolute control of De Leon. The national office made expulsion from the party the wages of working with the two large unions. The greatest drawback to Socialist Labor success in the union field was not the doctrinaire attitude or rigidity of party members, for even those who were dogmatic in thought were often opportunistic in practice, but the centralization of authority -- a centralization which was particularly disagreeable to the American members.

It was the same in the attempts of the party to appeal to native-born Americans with its principles. Failure resulted not so much from the party's European doctrines as from its centralized control. The national office interfered in many activities on the local level, and was always quick to criticize local methods and attitudes. Furthermore, the fact that the power was located in the greater New York area was distasteful to most Americans. The concentration of all power into the hands of a small group of national officers was bad enough, but when it was compounded by giving the New York City area the only check and the full right of choosing the executive, there was no effective appeal left for the majority of socialist-inclined Americans.

Many members and sections voiced dissatisfaction, from time to time throughout the nineties, with the party's organizational arrangement. This dissatisfaction was illustrated by the Ohio and Massachusetts troubles, both of which were due to a desire, on the part of the local group to be more nearly free from national discipline. Americans in general are fond of the representative system of government; most Americans within the party believed that there was nothing antithetical between a representative system and scientific Marxism. The refusal of the nation-

al executive to grant representation to the nation as a whole was a primary factor in the party's lack of appeal to the English-speaking adherents of socialism.

The fact that the group was Marxist in thought should have commended it to American socialists. That this actually could have been the case is demonstrated by the rapid growth of the Debs party. The failure of the Socialist Labor Party to embrace the main body of socialists is not explained by a lack of Marxism; the party was deeply, even religiously, committed to Marx's teachings, as the poems in Appendix I (especially "Fair Was The Day") will show. In the party's study classes a wide range of Marxian interpretation was presented. However, while free discussion was allowed in the classes, the conclusions were determined by the national office. And the national office had the power to expel members for differences in Marxian theology. This drastic step was not generally taken; normally ridicule and belittling by the national executive was sufficient to make the dissident leave of his own accord.

The socialist press was sometimes blamed by De Leon for the slow progress which the party seemed to be making. The party press, it seemed, never had really great success in recruiting members. Yet the non-party socialist press



was in most cases doing well. Wayland was mailing thousands of socialist papers out of Girard, Kansas. The various non-party Tageblatts were doing well. The Volkzeitung, as a daily, had a large circulation and was in the black financially. The Socialist Labor Party press, however, never equalled the other socialist papers in achievement, as measured either by circulation or quality. It was affected adversely by 1) the supervision and contentiousness of the national office and 2) the necessity of subordinating the local press in order to push the nationally controlled, De Leon-edited The People. But the national paper reflected the thought of the national office rather than the practice of the party members, and hence it reflected a doctrinaire dogmatism which made it a poor vehicle for recruiting converts.

American socialists, and for that matter, Americans in general, have always been as interested in the "here and now" as they have been in the "pie in the sky." The Socialist Labor Party of today places itself out of the running in the race for American socialist support by offering its rewards only after the socialist revolution, although it has always criticized capitalists and religionists for doing the same thing. But the Socialist Labor Party of the nineties had immediate demands, and maintain-

ed them till 1900. In theory they were given up at that time; in practice most party members still kept them in mind. In that decade, then, the party did have aims which could have appealed to many; that there was little appeal is due to the leadership of De Leon, who did not really agree that immediate goals were an appropriate concern for Marxian socialists. As De Leon's national office controlled agitational activities as well as doctrine, it was difficult to gain converts even to a program dedicated to immediate reforms.

It is possible for a European idea to take root in America; many have done so, and we are the richer for them. But it is very difficult for an organization based on an imported political or economic idea to take root if its members do not have some check or control over their own organizational hierarchy, when this hierarchy does not reflect the desires of a majority of the members. The national office of the Socialist Labor Party was not reined, and it did not accurately mirror the desires either of its own followers or of labor as a whole. The Socialist Labor Party, as a result, was a failure.

## APPENDIX I

### Selected Socialist Labor Poems

#### RHYMES FOR JUVENILE OLD PARTY INTELLECTS

for the sake of those opponents of  
Socialism on whom argument is  
useless and logic is wasted

Hey diddle diddle!  
I'll read you a riddle,  
As plain as the man in the moon;  
How long it will take  
For the Government's sake  
To send this whole country to ruin?

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,  
She had so many children she didn't know what to do,  
For a few had monopolized all of the bread,  
While the others had nothing, no victuals, nor bed;  
So this good Mrs. Grover--why, what did she do?  
She issued some bonds for the sake of a few.

Old Dan Tucker is a fine old man,  
He votes for Cleveland when he can;  
Without a red cent to his name,  
He votes for Cleveland just the same.

Sing a song of sixpence!  
Fifty cents a day.  
Associated Charities  
Know how to pay.  
When the winter's over,  
The birds begin to sing,  
Happy is the worker  
When Capital is king.

- - Herbert N. Casson  
The People (New York), Feb. 25, 1894.

#### OUR RED FLAG

Some say: "From the veins of Death  
Their banner has its dye;"  
Some shout: "'Tis the flag of Carnage  
That thus they wave on high!"

O people, foolish, wicked,  
 Hear now and ponder well!  
 'Twas Christ Himself who taught us  
 What our banner has to tell.

He said, "Ye all are brothers!"  
 And we who count this good  
 Now preach it by the symbol  
 Of warm and living blood.

The blood that flows in all men  
 Whate'er their race or birth;  
 The blood that proves the kinship  
 Of all who tread the earth.

Then see ye not! Oh, people!  
 'Twere well to cease your strife  
 Against our crimson banner,  
 For 'tis the Flag of Life!

And join our ranks, oh, people;  
 With us come marching on  
 To rear the glorious Commonwealth  
 To gain the Rights of Man

- - Frances McDaniel  
The People (New York), May 6, 1894.

#### THE BOODLERS (Tune: The Bowery)

Oh, the day that I left New York,  
 What do you suppose was all the talk?  
 "Capital will ride but Labor may walk,  
 Or he'll never get there any more."

Chorus: The Boodlers, the Boodlers!  
 We don't need them any more.  
 They say such things and they do such things  
 The Boodlers, the Dudelers,  
 We don't need them any more.

The working men, they make me tired;  
 They're content if they're only hired,  
 When the BOSS don't need them they get fired,  
 And they never see him any more. Chorus

The Capitalist says: "Put your trust in God,  
Your time will come if you'll carry the hod."  
But when luck comes you're under the sod,  
And you don't need it any more. Chorus

Oh, if all the workmen had common sense  
Couldn't they just about rake the fence;  
You could line up the capitalists for ten cents,  
For I don't think they'd fetch any more. Chorus

What's the use of having a Boss  
Who works you night and day like a horse,  
And makes you sweat if he suffers a loss;  
Why, slaves couldn't stand any more. Chorus

What's the use of having a vote  
If you put yourself in the very same boat  
With the capitalist who will only cut your throat  
Until he can do it no more. Chorus

Why not vote with the S. L. P.  
Necessities of life would then be free;  
Order and justice the rule would be  
And you never would want any more. Chorus

The workingmen's danger is the "Boodle Press,"  
They tell lies daily, they make a fine mess,  
They're Capitalist wolves in the Labor lamb's dress,  
Oh, I wouldn't read them any more. Chorus

This winter no coal, and we're all of us taught to  
Be satisfied with that "as we surely oughter,"  
So the capitalist says while we're mixing mortar,  
Will we never be warm any more? Chorus

You all may yet live to see the day when  
They'll disfranchise you, what'll you do then?  
It only needs a stroke of the pen,  
And you never can vote any more. Chorus

- - Composed for and sung at an S. L. P.  
festival February 20, 1893.  
The People (New York), March 12,  
1893.

They tell me go suck for a living,  
 But that, I must say, I don't like;  
 And what would become of our suckers  
 If nobody ever did strike?

- - B. E., Red Wing, Minn.  
The People (New York), March 26, 1893.

### FAIR WAS THE DAY

Delivered at South Framingham, Massachusetts, July 30, 1899; inscribed for the anniversary reunion of the Karl Marx classes of Boston and vicinity. Dedicated to Mrs. Martha Moore Avery.

O fair was the day and still fairer the hour,  
 When a mother of Treves gave a son not in vain:  
 Who beholding proud England consume labor power,  
 Marx opened in science the cap of her reign;  
 Not the tricks of bold Europe alone did he ferret,  
 But marked it the classic spot in the world's shame,  
 O, then as we triumph, remember his merit,  
 And honor the classes that meet in his name.

The heart of the system in darkness lay hidden  
 Till his magical brain poured forth the white light.  
 From France and from Belgium, the world saw him driven,  
 For espousing the cause of the workers' great fight:  
 And the brave "Manifesto," now shining in history,  
 Served as the basis of high international claim;  
 O, then in the splendor of on-coming victory,  
 Let us honor the classes that meet in his name.

Though anxious and tireless his life was expended,  
 In work for the workers, to study with care,  
 Though he died ere our Party in Boston ascended  
 To light the fierce struggle of doubt and despair;  
 The storms he endured in his great life's December,  
 The knowledge his science foresaw and o'ercame,  
 In our Party's rich harvest shall comrades remember  
 And honor the classes that meet in his name.

Nor forget his companion, who, in tender affection,  
 By the side of her dead whom love could not save,  
 With no casket, no money in death's dark affliction,  
 To protect against want or the mold of the grave,

Though thy name does not mingle with saints or with angels,  
 The reign of thy virtue, sweet Jenny, we claim.  
 And with tribute to Marx join the friendship of Engels,  
 Though a tear dims the eye as we murmur thy name.

Yet lads, give a cheer, and change the sad measure,  
 The rites of our grief and our sorrow to stay;  
 To our party and comrades, devote now the leisure,  
 The wisdom to plan, and the zeal to obey;  
 Then up with the banner, and sing its great glory,  
 Forget not the brave Sections who fan the bright flame,  
 A hundred years hence men shall feed on the story,  
 And honor the classes that meet to our name.

--- Byron Efford  
The People (New York), August 27, 1899.

## APPENDIX II

Membership of Sections of D. A. 1  
 Eligible to Send Delegates to the July, 1898,  
 S. T. & L. A. Convention

Union	Membership
Ale and Porter Union	200
Bartenders	90
Bohemian Butchers	150
Bohemian Typographia	32
Carl Sahn Club	80
Empire City Lodge	35
Furriers	250
German Coppersmiths	80
German Waiters	260
Independent Bakers No. 25	45
Independent Bakers No. 33	60
Liberty Waiters	65
Macaroni Workers	65
Marquette Workers	70
New York Cooks	55
Piano Makers	520
Pressmen and Feeders	18
Progressive Cigarette Makers	970
Progressive Typographia	15
Silver Workers	40

Union	Membership
Swedish Machinists	98
United Engineers	60
Total	<u>3,258</u>

- - Nahum I. Stone, Attitude of The Socialists to the Trade Unions, quoted by Paul Brissenden, The I. W. W. A Study of American Syndicalism (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957), p. 52. Brissenden incorrectly identifies the total as being the whole S. T. & L. A. membership.

### APPENDIX III

A Selected List of S. T. & L. A. Locals to Illustrate the National Nature of the Organization

Local	Name	City and State
1	Daily People Alliance	New York, N. Y.
3	Mixed Alliance	Minneapolis, Minn.
77	Mixed Alliance	Boston, Mass.
96	Hoboken People's Orchestra	Hoboken, N. J.
104	Textile Workers	Philadelphia, Pa.
130	Mixed Alliance	Bartonville, Ill.
137	Progressive Musical Union	Paterson, N. J.
140	Bronx Borough Labor Club	Brooklyn, N. Y.
165	Tailors' Alliance	Washington, D. C.
168	Proletariat Labor Club	Lynn, Mass.
172	Manton Mills' Weavers' Union	Olneyville, R. I.
191	Mixed Alliance	Allegheny City, Pa.
197	Miners' Alliance	Pueblo, Colo.
207	German Carpenters' Union	Detroit, Mich.
221	Miners' Alliance	Dubois, Pa.
226	Machinists' Pioneer Alliance	London, Ont.
244	Cloakmakers' Union	Toronto, Ont.
250	Mixed Alliance	Vancouver, B. C.
263	Mixed Alliance	Seattle, Wash.
268	Mixed Alliance	San Antonio, Tex.
282	Swedish Machinists' Alliance	Newark, N. J.
318	Weavers' Alliance	Lawrence, Mass.
325	Street Car Workers' Union	Los Angeles, Cal.
342	Forest City Alliance	Cleveland, O.
345	Pioneer Mixed Alliance	San Francisco, Cal.
355	Karl Marx Alliance	New York, N. Y.
368	Woollen Weavers' Alliance	Plymouth, Mass.



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